

THE STRUGGLE OF AFRICAN INDIGENOUS KNOWLEDGE SYSTEMS IN AN AGE OF GLOBALIZATION

A Case for Children's Traditional Games in South-Eastern Zimbabwe



Munyaradzi Mawere

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Munyaradzi Mawere



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Dedication

To my entire family

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Preface

The Struggle for African Indigenous Knowledge Systems in the Age of Globalization generally focuses on indigenous knowledge systems (IKSs) in formally colonized African societies. In particular, the book explores with profound depth the current status of traditional children's games in the aforesaid societies. While most of the African states' status of indigenous knowledge systems has been fatally undermined by their colonial histories and the hegemony of Western Science and imperialism, the book adopts Zimbabwe, and in particular south-eastern Zimbabwe where this research was carried out. South-eastern Zimbabwe being a society in a formerly colonized Zimbabwe, the case study implies that the selected society represents many others.

Focusing on the adopted case study, it is a historical truth that Zimbabwe is one country whose indigenous knowledge systems have been drastically affected by decades of colonial rule, subjugation and its encounter with globalization alongside unprecedented economic and political crises especially since the turn of the new millennium. Before colonization, for example, children played a myriad of traditional games such as '*chamuvandwamuvandwa*' (hide-and-seek), '*chamukambina*' (one legged man) and '*nhodo*' (jacks), among many others. With the advent of colonialism and Zimbabwe's encounter with globalization, these games have since been replaced by television watching as well as track and field games such as golf, cricket, rugby, wrestling, boxing, netball (women's), tennis, horse racing and soccer. Soccer has even been pronounced the national sport for Zimbabwe. Such a move has negatively impacted the Zimbabwean traditional children's games resulting in the partial or total de-

valorisation, marginalization and possible extinction of most of the traditional games. It is this realization, among others, that prompted me to carry out a research of this nature. As such, an account of games that were and are still (some of them) played by the Shona children in their traditional villages in south-eastern Zimbabwe are presented in this book. The book does not only describe the games, but goes a step further to draw and emphasize the educational value of the games to the Shona child. It is curious to note the similarity in the Shona children's traditional games and those played by other children the world over, yet the games have been marginalized and sometimes despised in the face of colonialism and globalization thereby undermining the integrity of the Shona and by extension African culture as a whole.

Worth noting is the point that while some African countries like South Africa, Namibia and Nigeria are moving towards the direction of Indonesia and India in protecting (through laws) and marketing their indigenous knowledge systems in the global market arena, a lot more is still desired to be done in many other African countries such as Zimbabwe and even in the abovementioned countries. Though the concept of indigenous knowledge systems is problematic or rather difficult to define with precision, for purposes of this project, it is generally understood as the sum total of the knowledge and skills [of a particular people] that have failed to die despite the racial and colonial onslaughts that they have suffered at the hands of western imperialism and arrogance¹. According to this definition, all IKSs alongside their creative projection originate locally, naturally and develop through ages. This understanding concurs with Ocholla's recent definition where he states that indigenous knowledge systems 'are a complex set of knowledge and

technologies existing and developed around specific conditions of populations and communities indigenous to a particular geographic area'.² As highlighted in both definitions, it is no doubt that children's traditional games and plays fall under the category of indigenous knowledge system. In chapter one, I explain in greater detail the concept of IKSs before discussing why children's traditional games are considered a genre that falls within its precincts. In the same chapter, an effort is made to examine the impact of globalization on IKSs especially children's traditional games.

In fact the central argument advanced in chapters 1 and 2, and indeed that runs throughout this book is that in the current era of globalization, it is worthwhile for a culture to enrich itself from disparate sources, for instance with traditional children's games and plays from other cultures. However, in many formerly colonized countries, globalization has been considered culturally destructive and therefore undesirable. This is on account that globalization is allegedly accused of empowering some cultures to the detriment of others due to its tendency to mangle and replace cultures of other societies with those from outside. It is unfortunate to note that this argument is allegedly true of what is transpiring in many African countries, for example, in Zimbabwe where some games featuring on national televisions such as soccer, tennis and judo - only to mention a few - have practically replaced the traditional ones. It is no doubt that such a situation undermines the importance of IKSs and in particular 'local' traditional games. If continue unchecked, such a situation may result in the extinction of children's traditional games as has already happened with many other African IKSs; it may result in the total obliteration of 'indigenous cultures' (being cultureless). It is against this background and realization that I found it peremptory and

mandatory to carry out a research such as this to make a humble attempt to restore, reconstruct and carry into the future this treasury (traditional children's games and plays) of the past; to justify the necessity of rethinking and restoring some indigenous knowledge system genres for both the present and future generations; to assert that African traditional games are, after all, not inferior to western games, but equal in value and purpose.

Notes

1. Altieri, M.A. 1995. Agroecology: The Science of Sustainable Agriculture. 2nd Edition. London: IT Publications, pp. 114.

2. Ocholla, D. 2007. Marginalized Knowledge: An Agenda for Indigenous Knowledge Development and Integration with Other Forms of Knowledge. *International Review of Information Ethics*, 7(09), 1-10.pp.2.

Introduction

Amidst its encounter with colonialism and globalization, indigenous knowledge systems, especially in formally colonized states, have experienced sad histories of suffering dislocations, de-valorisation, pejorative labels, marginalization and threats of extinction. This has been so because the two 'forces' (colonialism and globalization) especially the latter poses one of the greatest challenges to nation-states and traditional local communities as it threatens to mangle and absorb them into the global system controlled by supranational and transnational institutions that are foreign to the 'local' or 'indigenous' communities. In fact the absorption of nation - states and traditional local communities (as a result of globalization) into the so-called global village undermines the role and impact of indigenous knowledge systems as this leads to both exclusion and inclusion; it results in what Cousins¹ refers to as the paradox of globalization. The inclusion of indigenous knowledge systems, for example, into the global world often result in the exclusion of the local people who depend on the knowledge systems for their livelihood.

Although I examine indigenous knowledge systems in general, I am more concerned with traditional children's games and plays among the Shona people of south-eastern Zimbabwe. Of course there is a certain amount of anthropological literature on Shona culture which focuses on studying communities and their ways of life. The literature include works by J. F. Holleman, M. Gelfand, M. Bourdillon and G.L. Chavunduka - to mention but the most prominent and prolific authors. These have all made significant contributions to our understanding of the Shona traditional

culture, but they have studied little of the Shona children's traditional games. In fact amongst all these Anthropologists, only Gelfand mentioned at least a dozen or so of Zimbabwean children's traditional games yet his study of the games was carried out with urban school children as his informants. His field was therefore the urban school and not the rural village or countryside where the children's traditional games are naturally played. This makes his study less ethnographic and typical of the Shona children's traditional games. In fact most of the games he considered were not recorded in places (such as rural villages) where they were naturally played, but from the urban children's narratives which are heavily modified and diluted by some elements from the West.

In view of this observation, this book is a contribution which usefully supplements Gelfand and other authors who contributed to the study of Zimbabwean children's traditional games from other perspectives i.e. psychology. The book has a great advantage that it focuses on an important genre that over the years has lost its legitimacy and recognition in Zimbabwean academic institutions and by extension African university and college curricula. Another big advantage of the present book is that it has been written after an ethnographic research and by a scholar who for a long time has been in contact and conversant with the Shona culture. Besides, unlike many other works on indigenous knowledge systems and in particular children's traditional games, the book advances the argument that it is only when all genres of indigenous knowledge systems are fully recognized and accorded their legitimate places in education curricula at all levels, and in particular college and university curricula, that a sustainable globalization in the production and advancement of knowledge can be achieved. Put differently, the present

volume seeks to express with great deftness the value and need to restore and reconstruct alongside globalization the African indigenous knowledge systems and carry them forward for both the present and future generations. In this regard, this book is not only a call for a return of Africa to its traditions and knowledge systems as proposed by Masolo, but a call to valorise African traditional knowledge systems without undermining those of others. In fact I try to restore, deconstruct and reconstruct the past and indeed go beyond what Masolo calls:

The call for a 'return to the native land' - one of the many revolutionary expressions of the then rising black militancy, nationalism, and Africanism...to counter Westernism's arrogant and aggressive Eurocentric culture.²

In the whole attempt to restore, reconstruct and carry forward the past while moving along with the present, I carried out the research on children's traditional games and plays for a period of about eight months, that is, between November 2011 and June 2012. The book thus employs ethnographic (anthropological), historical and philosophical approaches - methods with which data were gathered mostly from elderly people and primary school teachers in south-eastern Zimbabwe before subjected to qualitative analysis.

The Struggle for African Indigenous Knowledge Systems in the Age of Globalization is a critical study and description of a collection of eighty-four children's traditional games divided into fifteen chapters. Chapters one and two aptly and critically make a conceptual analysis of concepts of Indigenous Knowledge Systems, globalization, children's traditional games and plays before discussing how the latter (traditional children's games and plays) qualify as a genre of

indigenous knowledge system. The chapters also give primacy to the role of traditional games and plays as intellectual tools to sharpen the children's mental faculties and sources of entertainment especially in the countryside where tradition is still valued and media has less impact on the lives of peoples. Chapter three focuses on the study area and methodology employed in gathering data for the present book. Chapters four to fifteen which make the bulk of this book focus on specific categories of games and/or plays with some profound rigor and dexterity; the chapters discuss 'methodologies' and importance of specific traditional children's games and/or plays in considerable depths and with emphasis on the need for their restoration, preservation and recognition inside and outside education curricula at all levels.

It goes without saying that the present volume is designated to students and educators in areas of Social anthropology, Indigenous knowledge systems, African cultural studies, Cultural heritage studies, Social history, Child education, Educational psychology and all other parties interested in issues of indigenous knowledge systems, and in particular children's traditional games and plays.

Notes

1. Cousins, B. 2000. Tenure and common property resources in Africa' in Toulmin, C. and Quan, J. (eds). *Evolving land rights, policy and tenure in Africa*, London, DFID/IIED/NRI.

2. Masolo, D.A. 1995. *African Philosophy in Search of Identity*. Nairobi: East African Educational Publishers.

Chapter One

Beneath African Traditional Culture

After many years of contact with the Shona people of South-eastern Zimbabwe, the Swazi of Swaziland, the Tswana of Botswana, the Basotho of Lesotho, the Changanis of south Mozambique, the Ndaus of central Mozambique, the Zulu and Xhosa of South Africa, there are many things I shall always remember especially in their moral and spiritual living. The culture of these people as with those of other many Africans I am familiar with (through reading and contact), emphasize beliefs and values which are often deeply rooted in a group's history, customs and traditions. Their culture includes the custom of people including language and religion.¹ In fact while 'Europe is rich in material culture, Africa is rich in its moral and spiritual living, for its people believe in a way of life that provides their individual with peace.'² Morality and spirituality are therefore an African people's way of life - it is their culture. Hollins cited in Antony views culture as a man's medium when he asserts that:

There is not one aspect of human life that is not touched and altered by culture. This means personality, how people express themselves (including shows of emotion), the way they think, how they move, how problems are solved..... Culture is ...the essence of who we are and how we exist in the world. It is derived from understandings acquired by people through experience and observation...about how to interact with the physical environment and knowledge or beliefs about their relationships or positions within the universe.³

A critical reflection on Hollins' definition of culture above shows that culture has tremendous effects on how a group of people live, think, learn and solve problems in their daily lives. Taking an example of the African culture, this entails that the culture of the African people always have an influence on how they live with others, think of themselves and about the world around them, learn and solve problems that befall them. While I can safely say this characteristic is pervasive in the Africans of the places I have mentioned earlier in this section, this quality is not peculiar to them alone but to other African cultures as well. This aspect seems to be a result of the way Africans mingle with nature. Africans naturally love their nature and everything around them so long they are at peace with them. Elsewhere, I neatly captured this aspect of the African people and culture when I say:

African traditional culture originates from the interaction of the Africans with nature and everything around them. One more thing to note is that beneath the African traditional culture is the African traditional religion which in itself inspires African philosophy. The trio (African traditional religion, African traditional culture and African philosophy) are closely intertwined.⁴

From this understanding of Africans and their traditional culture, it can be noted that the latter is a system in itself. The logical qualification of African traditional culture as a 'system' is a result of its network of relations and processes with different components, such as knowledge, belief, religion, technology and even metaphysics. For example, a close examination of the relationship of the trio (African traditional religion, African traditional culture and African philosophy) with each other shows that they are all interconnected through the 'umbilical cord' of metaphysics. In general terms,

metaphysics deals with first principles and seeks to explain the nature of 'being', reality and ontology or existence. Taking into consideration that many religions, African traditional religions included, deal with explanations and beliefs about reality and ontology, religions qualify as metaphysics. That said, religious issues such as beliefs are considered metaphysical, but of course, as religious metaphysics, hence the relationship between African traditional culture, African traditional religion and African philosophy. By the latter I simply mean Africans' way of life. The epoxy resin between African traditional religions, culture and philosophy is supported by John Mbiti's observation that 'Africans are notoriously religious and religion is part and parcel of the African heritage which goes back many thousands of years'.⁵ If one is to critically analyse the above assertion by Mbiti s/he can notice that it suggests Africans are notoriously metaphysical though not in a purely philosophical sense of spectators and speculators, but as practitioners. No wonder why traditionalists in the African continent, especially the black Africans are opposed to globalization and in particular the rapid spread of Western values and lifestyles in Africa. For them, the dilution of African traditional culture by Western values is detrimental to what they cherish in their culture, especially indigenous knowledge systems, attitudes, moral values and customs related to their metaphysical beliefs. Thus while globalization can be allowed to take root in Africa, it however should respect and not subjugate the cultures of African societies. Father Tempels echoes the same sentiments when he argues that those who refuse to acknowledge the existence of black thought exclude blacks from the group of human beings. Thus to deny such values as cherished by African traditionalists is the same as denying their existence as the latter is mirrored by their religion and

way of life in general. Such denial of the existence of other human beings in the realm of existence has been criticised by African scholars such as Molefi Kete Asante. He, cited in Mengara, notes that national liberation of the African nations was against a certain socio-historic context that Hegel wrote in 1828: 'Let us forget Africa, for it is no part of human history.'⁶ The Diop-Olela tradition, also opposed to the Hegelian bias quotes from George James's *The Stolen Legacy* in Masolo who neatly remarks:

*Now that it has been shown that philosophy and science were bequeathed to civilization by the people of...Africa and not by the people of Greece, the pendulum of praise and honour is due to shift from the people of Greece to the people of the African continent...that the Greeks were not the authors of Greek philosophy, but the people of Africa.*⁷

These sentiments by African scholars have been tested and tried in time. They conclusively shutter the false pride and undeserving arrogance of some Western scholars whose works have for a long time 'injured' the African culture and all that is embedded in it. Besides, the sentiments suggest that Africa and its people are rich in ways too numerous to mention. The treasury of Africa is realised in its indigenous knowledge systems, proverbs and idioms, among other 'scientific' and literary genres. For example, through its 'rich' languages that are full of figures of speech and also the spirit of *ubuntu* (humanness) which is at the heart of African traditional religion, Africans are able to distinguish the right from the wrong, the bad from the good. Besides, they are able to formulate their metaphysical and epistemological assertions. Mogobe Ramose defines this mega aptitude as 'the root of African philosophy' and of course, African culture.

Ramose furthers to point that the being of an African in the universe is 'inseparably anchored upon ubuntu...Ubuntu then is the wellspring flowing with African ontology and epistemology.'⁸ This means that beneath African traditional culture are their philosophy of life and religion embedded and expressed in the matrix of their day to day practices and language. Affirming the view that beneath African traditional culture are the religious symbols, objects, art, dance, music, proverbs, folklore, riddles, idioms and wise sayings manifest religious expressions, John Mbiti succinctly puts it that:

Because traditional religions permeate all the departments of life, there is no formal distinction between the sacred and the secular, between the religious and the nonreligious, between the spiritual and the material areas of life. Wherever the African is, there is his religion: he carries it to the field where he is sowing seeds or harvesting a new crop; he takes it with him to the beer party or to attend a funeral ceremony....⁹

The recognition of African traditional religion and African philosophy as elements beneath African traditional culture remains the need to reclaim reason for Africa and for Africans to embrace their culture now and for ever. It is the cause for concern for some renowned African scholars such as Ngugi wa Thiongo who in turn advocate for decolonization of the African mind whose consciousness and culture were for a moment submerged and undermined by Western imperialism. For Ngugi and rightly so, decolonization of the African mind is necessary even today taking into consideration that some Westerners viewed Africa as a dark continent devoid of any reason, history and culture. The denial of culture and philosophy to Africa had fatal consequences to Africa and the African people as it:

...served as an ideological licensing of exploitation, subjugation and colonialism. There is therefore need for Africans to go back to their culture where their religious aspirations, philosophy and most importantly their indigenous knowledge systems are buried.¹⁰

The latter (indigenous knowledge systems) requires special attention since it is present in the matrix of all African systems, be it religion, philosophy or culture as a whole. Besides, it is the focus of the present book.

Defining Indigenous Knowledge Systems

Indigenous knowledge systems (IKSs) are a phenomena pervasive in any human society the world over. In Africa as in other parts of the world, IKSs have always been used for various purposes depending on the needs and aspirations of the society in question. This suggests that IKSs are quite enduring such that they have survived the test of time and history. In view of this understanding, IKSs can be defined as local knowledge(s) that is unique to a given culture or society.¹¹ They are knowledge forms that have failed to die despite the racial and colonial onslaughts that they have suffered at the hands of western imperialism and arrogance.¹² The two definitions given above suggest that IKS as a form of knowledge is intergenerational, that is, it is passed on to future generations by those who hold it. Also important to note from the aforementioned definitions is that IKSs have originated naturally and locally. However, a critical question arises here: 'What does it mean to be local?' In relation to the second definition, a critical question can be raised as well: 'Does IKSs as knowledge forms only exist in formerly colonised areas?' Considering these two possible critics, my conception of IKSs identifies with Ocholla who perceives

IKS as a complex set of knowledge and technologies existing and developed around specific conditions of populations and communities indigenous to a particular geographic area.¹³ The complexity of IKS results from the logical qualification with the word ‘system’ as it suggests generations of creative thought and practice as well as a network and ‘meshwork’ of processes with different components such as knowledge, belief and technology. On the other hand, IKSs are ‘indigenous’ because the meanings as well as the categories of sense making are generated internally within a cultural community and are/were produced through ‘indigenous’ thinking or exploration whether material, philosophical, religious or linguistic. This means indigenous knowledge can also be understood (if you like) as local knowledge,¹⁴ traditional knowledge,¹⁵ local technical knowledge, indigenous and traditional knowledge,¹⁶ community knowledge and in some cases, even folkloric knowledge.¹⁷ In this book, the terms indigenous knowledge system (IKS) and indigenous knowledge (IK) are applied to mean one and the same thing, and therefore used interchangeably. It should be emphasized that what commonly underlies all these bodies of knowledge known as IKSs is the fact that they are developed through the processes of acculturation and through kinship relationships that societal groups form, and are handed down to the posterity through oral tradition as well as cultural practices like rituals and rites. Also, IKS remain the adhesives or epoxy resin that bind and harmonise society as they constitute communicative processes through which knowledge, moral values and philosophy are transmitted, preserved and acquired by humans in a given society. While up to this point, the conception of IKS is clear and easy to understand, it becomes somehow difficult to conceptualize as soon as certain elements from other cultures are assimilated over

time. Against the difficulty assimilation brings into the concept of IKS, I argue that the dilution of indigenous knowledge systems by way of assimilation does not negatively alter its understanding. In fact indigenous knowledge need not essentially be traditional in nature for it to be considered indigenous. Knowledge thus is still considered ‘indigenous’ despite being contemporary. Contemporary knowledge serving indigenous ends, or using indigenous materials or processed through indigenous rules or heuristics can also be part and parcel of IKSs provided it is interpreted through local cultural meanings. A fine example is India’s knowledge of tea growing and manufacturing. It is a well-known fact that until two hundred years ago, India did not cultivate tea bushes. But, today India is one of the biggest consumers of tea in the world. This example makes clear my argument that a lot of indigenous knowledge systems has evolved all over the world in much the same way those around the tea plants, tea manufacturing and the use of the waste and used tea leaves have evolved.

Yet it should be remarked that the assimilation by many indigenous knowledge systems has been largely a result of globalization which, of course, has had varying impacts on different societies. Let us examine the impact of globalization on the African indigenous knowledge systems.

The Encounter of Indigenous Knowledge Systems with Globalization in Africa

With the advent of colonialism in Africa and the encounter of indigenous knowledge systems with globalization, a lot of changes have occurred throughout Africa’s traditional villages. Most of these changes have been considered by African traditionalists as negative and

detrimental to Africa and the African people. Colonialism, for instance, have been blamed for underdeveloping Africa by stealing away its valued natural resources. In Zimbabwe, the Whites from Britain have allegedly stole away valued resources such as land, ivory and minerals among many other resources.¹⁸ Besides, the Europeans in Zimbabwe as in many other parts of Africa during colonialism diverted Africa's natural direction of technological and scientific development. This diversion of Africa's scientific and technological advancement had negative impact on the general development of indigenous knowledge systems. Black Africans, for example, were taught to despise their own culture and to believe that Western knowledge systems are the only ones with the right to the universal construction of knowledge. Globalization had almost similar effects on the development of Africa's 'local' forms of knowledge as it empowered some cultures while impoverishing others such that the former tended (and still maintains the tendency) to mangle and engulf the latter. But perhaps this can be clearer after unpacking the concept of globalization itself.

The concept of globalization can be a very confusing term and is often difficult to pin down with precision. For this reason, Mittelman regards globalization as 'a syndrome of processes and activities rather than a single, unified phenomenon.'¹⁹ The processes and activities Mittelman is referring to concerns the reduction of barriers between countries and continents. This reduction of barriers results in a world without borders - what is commonly referred to as 'the global village' where distance and space are absent and in fact out of question. Ideally, in such a world (without borders), a single community with a common pool of resources exist or at least closer economic, political and social interaction are encouraged. It is this closeness in economic,

political and social interaction between countries and continents that gives other countries and continents advantages over others to the extent that they end up exploiting or submerging others in the name of globalization. This is true when considering indigenous knowledge systems in Zimbabwe and many parts of Africa which for years have failed to be recognized in global arena due to the lasting effects of colonialism and globalization, systems which demonized and considered African indigenous knowledge systems as unscientific by Western standards. Instead of African indigenous knowledges being part of the whole knowledge system, they were despised, undermined and buried 'underground' in order to be forgotten. This has appeared as if those knowledge systems that are Western are the only ones that can be considered global and scientific. All those knowledge forms that come from other continents have therefore been undermined with their people forced either physically or by circumstances to discard the knowledge forms that are legitimately theirs and adopt those that are Western or rather foreign. It is this realization that has partly made globalization a confusing and difficult concept to pin down or define with precision. Yet though a confusing concept, globalization is not a new phenomenon. O'Rourke and Williamson²⁰ refer to economic historians who attach the 'big bang' significance of globalization back to the years 1492 (when Columbus landed in the Americas in search of spices) and 1498 (when Vasco de Gama journeyed around Africa). Williamson²¹ is however, of the opinion that the first globalization boom took place in the late nineteenth century when the benefits of revolutionary breakthroughs in transportation and communication were realised. For him, the ultimate result of this revolutionary breakthrough was rapid growth in world trade. Yet even that time around, the

negative impacts of globalization could be felt and realized by some countries. This realization led to a general retreat from globalization during the period 1913 to 1950. As given by Frankel, the reason for this retreat

...was the inequality trends produced by this process during the preceding period. This is evident in the isolationist sentiments after World War I, monetary instability and depression during the interwar period, increases in tariffs and other trade barriers and the rise of the communist 'bloc' in the 1940s.²²

The second globalization boom took place in the mid-twentieth century, but really accelerated during the early seventies. International trade did not regain its pre-World War I importance until the early 1970s. Frankel²³ refers to the fact that it took the US more than 25 years after the end of World War II to reach the level of globalisation it experienced before World War I. This means that like a bus which does not reach all stations at the same time, globalization does not reach all countries at the same time as it moves faster than what most countries can do. For this reason those in the margins – the poor where globalization reaches last - are often marginalized by those who hold at the helm of globalization. This observation and realization have led some critics to argue that while the opportunities and benefits of the opening of economies are emphasized by proponents and supporters of globalization, the latter is causing more harm than good. As a matter of consequence, discontentment and mistrust are developing among many policy-makers, political and economic analysts about the possible risks of globalizing national economies as well as its impact on culture especially of the less privileged/poor who are reduced to what Giorgio Agamben refer to as the 'bare

life' or 'raw life,'²⁴ to use Fiona Ross's words. Unfortunately, this seems to be what exactly has happened with the African indigenous knowledge systems on their encounter with globalization. They were misrepresented by some Western researchers as bounded, savage and primitive; hence unfit for global consumption. This led to the decline in the use of African indigenous knowledge systems even by Africans themselves who for centuries relied on the systems for their livelihood and sustenance.

Yet while African IKSs have been marginalized at one point or another by 'modern science' ushered in by the twin forces of colonialism and globalization, it is worth noting that they have gained prominence in the recent years. This prominence has been largely a result of the role IKSs have and are playing in the preservation of biodiversity and social systems of some African cultures. However, even though indigenous knowledge has recently been recognized as a form of knowledge, it still doesn't enjoy the same status as formal/modern science. This recognition of modern science as the most legitimate of all knowledge forms raises a critical question around knowledge construction and classification i.e. 'Who has the mandate to construct and classify knowledge as formal or indigenous?' This question is somehow tricky as it begs yet another question: 'Who gives those classifying knowledge as formal or indigenous the mandate to do so?' In view of such questions, scholars such as Matose and Mukamuri,²⁵ have suggested that knowledge is constructed and classified in relation to history, culture, politics, economics, and more importantly, power relations. The argument that the duo are advancing is that those who are socially, economically and politically disadvantaged - the poor and powerless - are always forced to accept the knowledge of the rich and powerful as the most real and

important of all forms of knowledge. The powerful rich thus assume the double role of being a player and an adjudicator, all in one, as they bestow upon themselves the mandate of acknowledging knowledge as real, scientific and worth consuming or otherwise. This means that the labelling of knowledge as 'indigenous' or 'formal' by the powerful rich influences the credit and value attached to it resulting in power struggles between knowledge forms and researchers in different fields i.e. some knowledge forms being considered as more superior than others. This is one other reason why I have argued that globalization and colonialism in Africa have impoverished the African traditional cultures. Instead of the former enriching African traditional cultures, more value was taken away leaving the cultures with no or little value befitting them to qualify as 'global' or 'international'. This realization naturally puts those alleged to have propagated and propelled the 'wind' of globalization (developed nations) at war with those forced to follow the wind of globalization (developing nations), especially given that most of the systems in latter, for example African traditional cultures, have failed to stand the test of time in the face of globalization.

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Chapter Two

Children's Traditional Games as Indigenous Knowledge Systems

The subject of children's traditional games has attracted the attention of researchers and scholars especially in the fields of African studies, literature and anthropology for some time now. I have however observed that most of the earlier works on children's traditional games and in particular, children's traditional games in Zimbabwe, have focused much on their recording mainly as comprehension passages in Shona textbooks. C.J. Ngwaru¹, G. Matindike² and A.C. Hodza³ textbooks are cases in point. In addition to that, these works make little or no analysis of the multi - dimensional role of these games to the African child. An addition of the latter component and methodology adopted in gathering material for this study makes this book different and more suitable for use by Anthropologists, students and instructors in the areas of African studies and Physical education.

Also, it is worth mentioning that besides Michael Gelfand's⁴ book, *'Growing Up In Shona Society'*, no other comprehensive anthropological text has been produced so far that looks at indigenous knowledge systems in general and in particular children's traditional games in Zimbabwe. Yet while Gelfand's text lays an important background for future anthropological researches, it has many visible misrepresented facts, by default or otherwise, about the Shona society. Besides, the text though mentions some of the children's traditional games among the Shona people, it exclusively focus on how the Shona child is brought up from pregnancy through adolescence to adulthood. Children's traditional

games are therefore mentioned in passing and not in great detail especially as a genre of indigenous knowledge system. Gelfand's treatment of children's traditional games thus seems accidental which makes his book, particularly the part he talks of children's traditional games, less comprehensive. Worse still, the data on children's games he considered were solely collected from informants in urban schools (students in urban schools) yet he claimed to be looking at the children's traditional games among the Shona people of Zimbabwe. In anthropological circles such a 'haste' generalization is never tolerated as it can be dangerous and misleading given that no country can be considered homogenous. In fact there are always variations throughout the country even where we talk of a particular well known traditional game such as 'tsoro' (draughts). It is therefore out of all these reasons that I was motivated and found it a worthwhile endeavour to carry out an ethnographic study on this important aspect of the Shona people in the south-eastern part of Zimbabwe; to examine the contribution of indigenous knowledge systems and in particular children's traditional games to the moral teaching, cognitive, social and physical development of the Shona child. This book therefore is an attempt to make a comprehensive study of the Shona indigenous knowledge systems and in particular children's traditional games in South-eastern Zimbabwe.

Yet critical scholars may still question the 'scientific' genre to which children's traditional games belong. In fact one may want to know if children's traditional games can be classified as an art or a science. To this question, I answer with confidence that children's traditional games, especially those studied in this book can safely fall under both sciences and arts. As an art, children's traditional games especially those found in the traditional villages of Zimbabwe shows a high

degree of abstract thinking on how the games came into being and help to shape and sharpen the mind of the Shona child. And as a science, the games are not played in a haphazard manner but a number of well-defined procedures are followed in order to successfully play them. In fact the procedures like those in sciences are empirically verifiable and based on the propositions of 'If...., then.....' If you fail to follow the procedures required to play a particular game, then you are playing a different game altogether. This is not to say that children's traditional games studied in this book fall under the so-called 'Natural sciences' but 'Social sciences', and in particular they fall under 'African science' generally known as African indigenous knowledge systems (IKSs).

In the preceding paragraphs, I have defined indigenous knowledge systems as a complex set of knowledge and technologies existing and developed around specific conditions of populations and communities indigenous to a particular geographic area.⁵ I have also made it clear that what commonly underlies all these bodies of knowledge known as IKSs is the fact that they are developed through the processes of acculturation and through kinship relationships that societal groups form, and are handed down to the posterity through oral tradition as well as cultural practices like rituals and rites. Granted, there are no doubts that children's traditional games and plays are complex sets of knowledge existing and developed around specific conditions of populations and communities indigenous to particular geographic locations. Second, when I asked some of my research participants in south-eastern Zimbabwe on how children's traditional games were/are preserved, I was told they are preserved through oral means and cultural practices. Through oral tradition and cultural practices, children's traditional games are through the ages handed down to

posterity. Important to note was the fact that children's traditional games are developed through kinship relationships in the Shona society.

An analysis of the above characteristics of children's traditional games shows that the same (characteristics of children's traditional games) are similar in all respects to those of indigenous knowledge systems per se. In fact if an IKS is a body of knowledge or bodies of knowledge of the indigenous people of particular geographical areas that they have survived on for a very long time and that can be passed (secretly or otherwise) on to another through rituals or rites, then, children's traditional games qualify as one form of IKSs - they are a genre of indigenous knowledge systems that have not been fully researched by anthropologists and exploited for the common good in many African societies including that of the Shona people. The consequences have been detrimental to the African traditional culture as in many African schools; educators and children have tended to use those forms of entertainment from the West. In an attempt to show African educators and those elsewhere the completeness and richness of African children's traditional games, I explain in some detail their role in cognitive, moral and social development of the African child.

The Role of Traditional Children's Games in Cognitive Development of the Young

Children's games and plays have attracted scholars in Psychology in an attempt to determine their implications in children's learning processes, identify their relationships to health and physical development of children, and to describe gender differences in children. On the whole, literature

review by scholars such as Piaget⁶ cited in Berger; Vygotsky⁷; Rogoff⁸ et al.; Tharp and Gillimore⁹; Pellegrini¹⁰; Pellegrini¹¹ et al.; Cordazzo¹² et al, and Neves¹³ et al. on children's games and plays demonstrated that the latter play a fundamental role in children's moral, social and cognitive development. While these studies are a worthwhile endeavour in child psychology, most of them have studied the Western and Eastern child on the main, with little or no focus on the African child. This echoes the importance of a study such as the present which in part focuses on the impact of African children's traditional games on development of the young. Results obtained from the present study and also from previous studies by the abovementioned Western and Eastern scholars have shown that during play young children take part in many activities that instil mental development. By play I mean any behaviour characterized as an unstructured self-amusement activity that has a goal in itself, and that can either be governed or not by prior rules.¹⁴ Characterized as free play are those activities that include the child's voluntary decision, in terms of when, with whom, where and how to play¹⁵ the game. Also, by cognition, I mean the mental process where by an individual, in this case, the child orders and processes information for use in his/her future life experiences. This means cognition can be used by a child in the future to acquire knowledge or certain skills necessary for his survival. Vygotsky¹⁶ makes this clear when he argues skills are not only determined by congenital factors, but mainly they are the result of social and cultural activities. For him, genetic characteristics, combined with nutritional, emotional and environmental factors can cause the individual to have a greater or lesser aptitude for performing different tasks. Basing on this understanding of the psychology of acquiring knowledge Vygotsky have understood cognition to mean the ability to perform an

action through the exercise of knowledge and skills that were socially, genetically and environmentally acquired.¹⁷ This connotes that a child's cognitive development can be measured from time to time. Measuring a child's cognitive development means identifying which skills and information a child already knows at that particular moment in time. During my research in South-eastern Zimbabwe and indeed my engagement with literature on child psychology, I have observed that most if not all children's games involve verbal interaction especially when learning and playing them. These verbal interactions (both private speech/audible internal dialogue and face-to-face verbal interaction) are an important cognitive tool in interactive growth of a child. Berger makes this clear when he asserts:

Researchers studying private speech have found out that pre-schoolers use it to help them think and learn to review what they know, decide what to do and explain events to themselves and incidentally to anyone else within earshot.¹⁸

For instance during my ethnographic studies in south-eastern Zimbabwe, it was common to hear children saying 'Ah, ndinozvigonawo izvo!' (Yes, I can also do that!) when one of the children performs an action or demonstrates a skill he thought was difficult for others to emulate. Face-to-face interactions could also be heard every time I sat adjacent a group of children playing their games. 'Ehe, ndakukunda' (Yes I have done better than you) and 'Ikozvino ndini' (Now it's my turn) were common words uttered during child play. Such interactions, in no doubt, help children to think seriously about the strategies they can use in order to play or perform particular skills better than others. Emphasizing the importance of face-to-face interactions, Berger has remarked:

If a child's learning is not aroused by his or her parents, it may be aroused – and powerfully – when the child begins to compare his or her skills with those of other children of the same age.¹⁹

Berger is not only emphasizing the importance of parents in a child's learning, but of peer guidance. The latter is important in that when playing, a child who now have mastered a particular skill or graduated from play apprenticeship due to his wide experiences in relation to peers normally give the apprentice guidance to other children who are less experienced. Such instructional interactions and peer guidance thus give children the opportunity to master skills, solve problems, minimize mistakes, learn by themselves and from others as they play and exhibit different skills. All this has a positive impact on the cognitive development of the child.

Moral Development of the Young

The concept of morality and in turn moral development can be hardly understood before unpacking the concept of ethics, hence the need to do so here and now.

Though defined differently in terms of semantics, ethics is reducible to what is good, bad, right and wrong. A borne of contention however arises when the question of what constitute that which is good, bad, right and wrong is raised. In other words, people do not disagree on what is ethics but on what constitute that which is considered as good, bad, right or wrong. For this reason, many people think that ethics means something esoteric, abstract, impractical and far-removed from reality. This is to render problematic the whole

subject of ethical thought resulting in those who attempt to define ethics labelling it an essentially contested concept.

It can however be argued that those who labour themselves to understand ethics, especially philosophers, disagree on what is good, bad, right or wrong because each one of them tries by expressing his/her own attitude to bring others to a similar attitude. This kind of doing has made ethics everybody's game. Thus, though almost everyone feels much attention and veneration should be paid to the concept 'ethics', to define it in an acceptable universally agreed manner has remained a thorny problem pertinent even to this day. However, what scholars seem to have agreed to each other is that the object of ethics is to philosophize about morality, hence the need to understand morality.

DeGeorge asserts that , 'morality is a term used to cover those practices and activities that are considered importantly right and wrong, the rules which govern those activities and values that are imbedded, fostered or pursued by those activities and practices'²⁰. Making a follow-up of DeGeorge's assertion, it implies that ethics is the philosophical study of morality; its object is to study morality. It is important however to note that the terms 'ethics' and 'morality' are treated by some people as slightly different basing on this understanding. In fact, what should be emphasized is that morality is a provider of injunctions that guide human beings in their conduct with others. For purposes of this work, the terms 'ethics' and 'morality' shall be used interchangeably throughout this book. In this regard, morality or ethics compels people to act in a certain way that is consistent with the expectations of the society they belong. For the sake of social consensus and harmony, people with common customs and traditions choose moral values which govern all their activities as a people.

This observation is not only unique of the Western society, but is universal of all human beings, young and old. As such, for young children to play their games in a non-conflicting environment they observe certain moral principles. During my research in South-eastern Zimbabwe, I could see that the observance of moral principles like tolerance and sensitivity i.e. avoiding a 'real' fight when there is disagreement/misunderstanding on a particular aspect of the children's traditional game played or when one child/group loses the game to another was quite evident. When an unjust act was done by a peer during plays, I often heard the children saying: 'Vanhu-we hatidi kubira' (You people we don't accept cheating); or 'Saka ngatitangezve kupedza nharo' (So let's start again to do away with the disagreement). I was somehow perplexed to observe that the children young as they were knew what is considered right or wrong, good or bad when contesting. Also, more often than not they had the patience to restart their games, and to do so successfully whenever a misunderstanding arose. It is from these observations that I concluded traditional children's games help the children to develop some sense of moral understanding while they are still young. In fact the above sentiments show that moral development during Shona children's traditional games is a 'socio-moral' process. They also show how the Shona child manages his/her emotions - maintaining enthusiasm and dealing with frustration - in a humble manner. Such elaborate apprenticeship during play is sure to develop a moral sense in children while they are still young. This is one other reason why I have argued in the preceding section that Shona children's traditional games are a type of indigenous knowledge system.

Good Sportsmanship Development of the Young

Besides literature review on child psychology, it was evident from my ethnographic research that children's traditional games also instil in the participants good sportsmanship. Listening to a group of young children playing children's traditional games, I often heard them saying 'ehe, apa wandikunda ngatitangezve' (This time I have lost the game to you, let's start again) or 'Tawanda ndiye shasha yedu pamutambo uyu' (Tawanda is our champion in this game). These values of how to handle successes and failures after a game - to accept defeat where a participant loses - and to recognize a peer as champion are a clear testimony of good sportsmanship. In fact sentiments such as 'This time I have lost the game to you, let's start again,' show that the losers are challenged not to give up but to be more determined to win next time when they play. Put differently, the loser realizes that his/her loss is a short term i.e. only for that particular moment, not a perennial setback that s/he can never overcome even with time and practice. To make this ease to accept, the Shona traditional culture has profound sayings which back up such experiences/situations. The saying: 'Nhasi ndezvangu mangwana ndezvakowo' (Today it's my turn, tomorrow it's yours) is a case in point. Failures or successes thus are a lifelong lesson that young children learn as they win or lose games to their peers during contests. In the case of failures, children learn self-assessment whereby they assess where they went wrong during contesting so as to right it in the future. This way, children learn while young that both a win and a loss teach a lesson to participants.

Another value of good sportsmanship that children learn is patience. Children learn that even if they lose this time, if they continue practicing they will always stand a chance to

win. In the Shona traditional culture, the virtue of patience is further encouraged through proverbial lore and idiomatic expressions such as ‘Rugare tange nhamo’ (Survival comes before comfort), ‘Kumhanya handiko kusvika’ (Hurrying up does not always guarantee safe arrival) and ‘benzi vhunza rakanaka’ (He who has the patience to ask end up knowledgeable). Thus the moral values enshrined in and that the young learn through children’s traditional games prepare them into becoming good sportsmen who can patiently wait for their winning turn to come.

Towards the Revival of Children’s Traditional Games

In the section on the encounter of indigenous knowledge systems (children’s traditional games included) with colonialism and globalization in Africa, I have argued that the former (IKSs) have always been despised and relegated to the periphery as ‘incomplete, partial,’²¹ primitive, superstitious, unscientific and irrational. The pejorative label of IKSs is predicated by hegemonic western scientism’s preoccupation with empiricism and evidence (through laboratory experiments) that render indigenous African beliefs and value systems inexplicable through the standards of expert science.²² In fact all African indigenous knowledge systems were considered unworthy holding, pursuing and practicing especially in the face of Western science.

Yet while science seeks to offer powerful, convincing explanations about diverse issues of nature notwithstanding its limitations, some civil unrest in Western world contexts have been instigated by the same scientific studies that have proven to be faulty, or inconclusive. As such, some scholars and members of the public have instigated independent inquiries to invalidate scientific findings of experts. Durant

cites Beck²³ who suggests that the ‘scientisation’ of protest against science means that even to dispute the scientific position of an opponent one usually relies upon science to make a persuasive challenge. This has been the dilemma of science especially when confronted with issues of metaphysical nature, for example, witchcraft where recourse to scientific laws and methods has proven to offer limited results. The dominance of science and perceptions about its opaqueness to the public has “led to a focus on ‘back-end’ consequences such as risk, in effect protecting the broader trajectory of scientific and technological development from accountability.”²⁴ This raises critical questions about whether different forms of knowledge cannot be developed outside the terms and parameters defined by science. What is lost in the process of moving from conventional scientific inquiry towards the unorthodox processes of searching for other forms of knowing like examining African children’s traditional games? These questions cannot be adequately addressed without challenging the monopoly of science, in particular Western science, as the predominant way of accessing, communicating and transmitting knowledge. The rise in ‘citizen science’- participatory processes of public understanding and even challenging of science research is the direct consequence of public frustration with the limitations of science. This is to say that while the merit of IKS cannot be underscored,²⁵ the mere danger of its extinction²⁶ means that there is a major need for its audit. Supporting the same idea, Thorntorn²⁷ argues that information auditing and mapping allows for the identification of current implementations, responsibility for the maintenance of data and the discovery of area in which improvements can be made or duplications eliminated. It is in this light therefore

that I argue for the revival of IKS, and in particular children's traditional games in Zimbabwe and Africa in general.

This work thus brings epistemological 'defamiliarisation'²⁸ to the extent that it questions the familiar to unravel the deep structural tensions/contradictions in knowledge and open up new epistemic positions. In the light of this understanding, I am convinced that once African indigenous knowledge systems, and in particular children's traditional games are put on the open and legitimized for public consumption the world over, there will be immense benefit by the whole terrain of knowledge. Some scholars like Lesley Green and Visvanathan have echoed similar sentiments, especially the need to resolve the duality of IKSs and Science once and for all in order to successfully progress in our quests for knowledge production and advancement. Visvanathan, for instance have considered the lack dialogue between Science and IKSs as lack of 'cognitive justice,'²⁹ that is, lack of a democratic and sustainable dialogue between different knowledge forms which seems to have been prompted by the idea that some humans are superior to others and to nature. Such a realization has also led scholars like Fairbanks to aver:

*Until recently, Western virtue ethics has never recognized nature-focused virtues. This is not surprising, since western philosophies and religions have promoted the ideas that humans are superior to nature and that there are no moral principles regulating our relationship to nature.*³⁰

In the light of this realization, the present research seeks to criticize the unbalanced relationship between Western children games and African children's games in terms of the value accredited to them even in African institutions such as

primary schools, teachers' colleges and universities. The present research therefore is an attempt to promote 'symmetrical anthropology'³¹ - an anthropology that moves beyond the nature/culture divides and is capable of representing both the modern and pre-modern perspectives. This is what Stengers calls 'cosmopolitics'³² - a politics constituted by multiple, divergent worlds whereby indigenous movements may meet scientists and environmentalists of different stripes. Such an approach has the merit that it allows the interface of Science with other knowledge forms like African children's traditional games and closes the current theoretical and research gaps in knowledge studies.

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Chapter Three

Study Area and Research Problem

As alluded to earlier in this book, this research was carried out among the Shona people in south-eastern Zimbabwe for a period of about eight months. While staying in the area where I had specifically come to carry out my PhD ethnographic study on the contribution of forest insects named edible stinkbugs (*harurwa*) as a drive to forestry conservation, I discovered that the area was rich in all respects especially in moral and spiritual culture more than I had imagined. I could observe little children playing different traditional games; some games were only played by one sex. Others were played by either or both boys and girls together. Those played only by boys were the more manly and sometimes perceived as dangerous such as ‘mutsimba’ (wrestling), ‘kuvhima’ (hunting), ‘nhanzva’ (sliding on rock surface) and ‘mudhongi’ (kicking donkeys). Still, other games were only played during the time of the day and others at night. I was curious to know more of this component of African culture and creative thought-in-action – children’s traditional games. There was no doubt that understanding these would certainly help deepen my understanding of the Shona thought and philosophy of life. Gyekye argues: ‘When studying African thought, we must rely on stories, oral traditions and social institutions, and so forth, as purveyors of thought’.¹ In line with Gyekye’s observation, the Shona children’s traditional games demonstrate and preserve Shona creativity and abstract reasoning. I looked at literature on the subject especially by Zimbabwean Anthropologists and scholars in African cultural studies and found out that little

had been done both before and after independence in 1980. This raised my curiosity to carry out this research even more, finally resulting in the present book.

Research Methodologies in Identifying Children's Traditional Games in South-eastern Zimbabwe

The research that resulted in the present book was carried out during part of my thirteen months stay in south-eastern Zimbabwe during the [same] time I was carrying out my ethnographic research for my PhD. Knowledge of my personal experiences in the same area since part of my childhood was also incorporated in the research. For the research to assume its present form, a number of social sciences research methods, especially those from fields such as Social Anthropology, History and Sociology were used in gathering the relevant data. These methods included the following:

Ethnography

Ethnography (from Greek *ethnos* = folk/people and *grapho* = to write) is a scientific research strategy often used in the field of social sciences, particularly in anthropology and in some branches of sociology². Yet though understood as such, ethnography as a scientific research method often used in the field of social sciences such as social anthropology has not been an easy concept to define with precision. It has been defined differently by different scholars. Fortes³, for example, understand it as interpretation of cultures for comparison with other cultures in an attempt to come up with a coherent account of the society in question. For Fortes, writing an anthropological monograph thus 'involves breaking up the vivid, kaleidoscopic reality of human action, thought and

emotion...and creating out of the pieces a coherent representation of a society"⁴. Geertz ⁵ emphasizes interpretation within a culture; hence he defines ethnography as description of a culture that depicts meaning of behaviour. Both scholars however emphasize that the task of ethnography is to interpret cultures to make meaning of differences. As such, ethnography generally involves describing, through writing, what one observes on human societies and/or cultures. From Fortes and Geertz's models elaborated above, Jacobson⁶ concluded that ethnographies are arguments. He develops his own model with which he argues that a 'good' ethnographic text should be presented in form of an argument comprising claims, evidence and data; an argument in the form of a syllogism (to use philosophical jargon). A syllogism is 'a statement with three parts, the first two (premises) of which prove that the third part (conclusion) is true.'⁷

That said, this research situates itself theoretically and methodologically within the framework of ethnography of communities⁸ given that it focuses on how people of a particular geographical location (the Shona children of south-eastern Zimbabwe) live and engage in traditional games as a way of socialization, intellectual and moral development in preparation for their adult life. The methodology adopted in this study is therefore ethnographic and strives to interpret and achieve 'thick description'⁹ of children's traditional games of the Shona people in south-eastern Zimbabwe in view of the conceptualization of indigenous knowledge systems by some social scientists. This means that for Geertz, and rightly so, ethnography is 'an interpretive act of thick description achieved through immersion in the lives of the informants avers a length period of time.'¹⁰ In this study, an ethnographic method which allowed me to carry out the research for nearly

a year was used to study the daily 'life worlds' of research subjects (young children) and how they foster aspects of moral, social and cognitive development in their traditional games - their routines, beliefs, fears and anxieties, their perspectives of game playing, society, life and how they define themselves. This is what James¹¹ calls ways of life of 'actual people' from the 'inside'. It underscores that ethnographic study seeks to describe and/or explain the cultural practices of a particular society or at least a segment of that society. This is made possible by the fact that an ethnographer works with one cultural group over an extended period of time living with them while making participatory observations. It should be noted that ethnography is typically not comparative, although the principle of comparison seems present in almost all social/cultural anthropology studies.

A 'good' ethnographic account is that whose claim is well substantiated with data and evidence within the text by mode of thought and mode of action, respectively.¹² Mode of action refers to kinds of data that warrants a claim by showing 'actual processes, practice or behaviour of individuals with reference to the ideas of those engaged in them but also with reference to other factors'¹³ like environment. On the other hand, mode of thought refers to 'the way in which people classify or conceptualize their world' or people's world views-the way people in a particular society see and understand their world. As previously highlighted, mode of thought is normally expressed through language used by members of the society under study, but sometimes is expressed through physical objects like artefacts that members of the society under study create. It is worth noting however that since no ethnographic study can be exhaustive, the present research is

only one among many that can be studied with the same research subjects in south-eastern Zimbabwe.

Participant Observation

Participant observation was the primary method with two to four days per week spent in the field over a period of at least eight months. As one familiar with the Shona language, I was able to participate in some of the children's daily interactions, of course, not all of them. I also observed, keep a field diary of interactions observed, audio and video record 'naturally' occurring communicative interactions with the participants in a range of everyday life activities, particularly during their plays. But since ethical questions in the area of research with human subjects, particularly on how research participants such as children should be treated have become a cause of concern over the past few decades, audio and video recording was done voluntarily and with the participants or their guardians/parents' consent. To facilitate my access to the community members and to ensure that data collection occurred from multiple perspectives, I recruit two key informants within each of the community I carried out my field work. Multiple observations have the merit that they allow for patterns to be identified so that verification of data can be done before presentation. The informants also assisted me with data collection; provided additional observations and information on the social meanings and significance of some children's traditional games.

Interviews

While the most common methods for collecting data in an ethnographic study is direct, first-hand observation of daily participation, another method known as interviewing, which include conversation with different participants and

involve small talk to long interviews was used. In particular, in in-depth interviews, both formal and informal were used. Interviews and discussions were focusing on the names and ways in which different children's traditional games are played. Besides, discussions made focused on symbolic significance of different children's traditional games and on participants' beliefs, views of culture aspirations as a people. Thus interviews and discussions furnished me with the inside and important information on children's traditional games in south-eastern Zimbabwe.

Questionnaires

Questionnaires were used especially in identifying the children's traditional games found in south-eastern Zimbabwe, and to aid the discovery of local beliefs and perceptions of the 'locals' on these games. Given that the present research was one that can be considered as a longitudinal research, where there is continuous long - term study of an area or site, questionnaires acted as valid instrument for measuring changes in the individuals or groups studied. Traditionally, the ethnographer focused attention on the researched community, selecting knowledgeable informants who know well the activities of the community.¹⁴ These informants were asked to identify other informants who represent the community, often using chain sampling. This process is often effective in revealing common cultural common denominators connected to the topic being studied.¹⁵

All this data which consisted of recordings of natural communicative interactions that demonstrate the children's traditional games in rural communities, life histories, underlying beliefs and how they interact with each other on daily basis, were captured in view of the analytical approach

of ‘social interaction analysis’¹⁶ and discourse analysis,¹⁷ in order to achieve a ‘thick description’¹⁸ of children’s traditional games in south-eastern Zimbabwe.

Categorizing Children’s Traditional Games in South-eastern Zimbabwe

During my study and recording of the different children’s traditional games in south-eastern Zimbabwe, I found out that the games were played for different purposes. Some were meant to develop the intellectual faculty and moral character of the child. Others to teach the young certain skills such as choosing a partner, dodging, hunting, cooking-only to mention a few- and the kind of socialization expected of a Shona child. Thus while most if not all of the children’s traditional games were entertaining and educative in some way, they taught different skills. In the light of these observations, I considered putting the games in different categories depending on the major ‘values’ in each game. By value I mean the important lessons that can be learnt from the game. From the forth to the last chapter, I have therefore put those games with ‘more’ similar values in one chapter. This has been done to facilitate understanding by readers who might want to know why this or that game was played.

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Chapter Four

Courtship/Love games

Every society has its own way of ensuring the continued existence of its customs, traditions and culture as a whole. In Zimbabwe, the Shona people traditionally used various mechanisms to ensure that this happens. One of these mechanisms was children's traditional games – for example courtship games - that were handed on to posterity orally and through traditional practices. From what I gathered during my fieldwork, courtship games were meant to introduce in an enjoyable way the young into the 'world of adulthood' and prepare them for their future. Through the courtship games, the young learnt how to choose a 'good' partner, to play with a partner of the opposite sex and how to care for their bodies in order to be presentable before others. Some of the courtship games I observed, studied and recorded in south-eastern Zimbabwe are these below:

Sipoti-Sipoti /Pote Pote (Round and Round)

This is a game played by young boys and girls together. The game teaches young children group formation and good behaviour as those who are bad mannered are never chosen as 'partners' during the game.

To play 'Sipoti-sipoti' (Round and round), boys and girls gather at one place and sit or crouch on the ground in a big circle. A leader is chosen to have the game started. The leader runs round and round the circle (inside the ring) singing the attributes of an ideal partner s/he likes. When the leader gets to that person, s/he says: 'Simuka hande' (Stand up, let us

go). This is an invitation to the chosen partner to follow. The two then sit or stand side by side and give the next person the chance to sing and chose an ideal partner of his/her own. This means the number of participants should be even to ensure that no participant remains without a partner. If the number is uneven such that one participant remains unchosen, the participant is jeered at. The same applies to a participant who chooses a partner who refuses to follow because s/he may not be seeing the person as the ideal with positive attributes s/he likes. As the participant runs round and round the ring, s/he sings:

Leader: Sipoti-sipoti (Round and round)

Chorus: Zangariyana (Go on)

L: Sipoti-sipoti (Round and round)

C: Zangariyana (Go on)

L: Ndinotsvagawo wangu (I am looking for someone)

C: Zangariyana (Go on)

L: Musuki wendiro (Who cleans my plates)

C: Zangariyana (Go on)

L: Anodzichenesa (Until they are clean)

C: Zangariyana (Go on)

L: Semwedzi wagara (Like a full moon)

C: Zangariyana (Go on)

L: Aiwa iwa simuka hande ndanga ndichireva uyu (Yes stand up and let's go, I meant you)

C: Zangariyana (Go on)

Nyuchi Idzo (Stinging Bees over There)

This is game played by both boys and girls together. The game teaches boys and girls to respond to different stimuli as

well as group formation i.e. choosing friends and partners to marry in the future. When selecting a partner, a participant should never choose a partner of the same sex as his/her. Also, a brother will not be allowed to select his sister if both are participating in the game. This is because it is a taboo in the Shona traditional culture to marry a person of the same sex or to marry your sibling.

To play 'Nyuchi idzo' (Bees over there), both boys and girls come together and stand in a big circle. A leader of either sex is chosen to start the game. S/he enters inside the ring and start walking round and round singing: 'Nyuchi idzo!' (Bees over there!). As soon as s/he says 'Apa cha-a!' (Exactly here!), he points at a partner he loves. The partner leaves the circle and takes over the lead singing. The song goes as below:

Leader: Nyuchi idzo! (Bees over there!)

Chorus: Haye he-he dzandiruma! (Oh yes they have bitten me!)

L: Nyuchi idzo! (Bees over there!)

C: Haye he-he dzandiruma! (Oh yes they have bitten me!)

L: Nyuchi idzo! (Bees over there!)

C: Haye he-he dzandiruma! (Oh yes they have bitten me!)

L: Apa cha-a! (Exactly here!)

C: Haye he-he dzandiruma! (Oh yes they have bitten me!)

L: Apa cha-a! (Exactly here!)

C: Haye he-he dzandiruma! (Oh yes they have bitten me!)

L: Apa cha-a! (Exactly here!)

C: Haye he-he dzandiruma! (Oh yes they have bitten me!)

L: Apa cha-a! (Exactly here!)

C: Haye he-he dzandiruma! (Oh yes they have bitten me!)

L: Nyuchi idzo! (Bees over there!)

C: Haye he-he dzandiruma! (Oh yes they have bitten me!)

L: Nyuchi idzo! (Bees over there!)

C: Haya he-he dzandiruma! (Oh yes they have bitten me!)

The game ends when all the children have participated in the selection process or when they are now too tired to continue playing the game.

***Sarurawako* (Choose Yourself A Partner)**

Like ‘Nyuchi idzo’ (Bees over there) described above, ‘Sarurawako’ (Choose yourself a partner) is a game that teaches good behaviour and group formation i.e. how children should select good friends and partners to marry in the future. The game also teaches the children to be observant and tolerant, that is, to learn to accommodate others during group activities.

To play ‘Sarurawako’ (Choose yourself a partner), young boys and girls come together and stand in a big circle. A participant of either sex can be chosen to start the game, but in most cases a boy starts off. He walks round and round the ring singing ‘sarurawako’ as he is looking around for a potential ‘partner’ to ‘marry’. When selecting a partner, a participant will never choose a partner of the same sex as his/her. Also, a brother will not be allowed to select his sister if both are participating in the game. This is because it is a taboo in the Shona traditional culture to marry a person of the same sex or to marry your sibling. The selected participant sings and describes the person s/he wants to marry (pick). The song s/he sings is as below:

Leader: Sarura wako (Choose yourself a partner)

Chorus: Kadeya –deya nendoro chena (With a white bead)

L: Sarura wako (Choose yourself a partner)

C: Kadeya-deya ane ndoro chena (With a white bead)

L: Wangu mutsuku (Mine is light in complexion)

C: Kadeya-deya nendoro chena (With a white bead)

L: Wangu murefu (Mine is tall)

C: Kadeya-deya ane ndoro chena (With a white bead)

L: Wangu munaku (Mine is beautiful)

C: Kadeya-deya ane ndoro chena (With a white bead)

L: Wangu mupfupi (Mine is short)

C: Kadeya-deya ane ndoro chena (With a white bead)

L: Wangu mutema (Mine is brown in complexion)

C: Kadeya-deya ane ndoro chena (With a white bead)

L: Wangu mukobvu (Mine is stout)

C: Kadeya-deya ane ndoro chena (With a white bead)

The chosen participant takes over the lead. It should be remarked that the game ends when all participants have had the chance to select their partners or when they are now too tired to continue playing the game.

Sungamusoro (White Tying/Tie the Head of the Gourd)

This game teaches young children how to choose good partners to marry. It is emphasized in the Shona traditional culture that one should marry a person with good manners and one who is good looking and hard working. Thus during the game those children who are always untidy or the lazy ones are never chosen.

To play 'Sungamusoro' (Tie the head of the gourd), boys and girls sit on the ground in a big circle. A leader is chosen. Once this is done, the leader walks round and round the ring (or round and round outside the ring) with a white cloth singing:

Leader: Sungamusoro-we dendende sunga wakanaka (Tie the head of a beautiful gourd)

Chorus: Dendende! (Tie!)

L: Sunga musoro-we dendende sunga wakanaka (Tie the head of a beautiful gourd)

C: Dendende! (Tie!)

L: Uyu mutema (This one is dark in complexion)

C: Haasungwi musoro (You can't tie her)

L: Uyu ane madzihwa (This one has mucus on her nose)

C: Haasungwi musoro (You can't tie her)

L: Uyu mutsvuku (This one is light in brown in complexion)

C: Sunga musoro (You can tie her)

All: He-e-e (As they will be dancing)

It should be emphasized that as the game progress, the leader chooses a partner and ties her head with a cloth. The one who has been tied takes over and the game starts over again. The game ends when all children have participated or are now too tired to continue playing the game.

Tsikidzi Muramu

This game is played by both boys and girls together. The game is an expression of love by a boy to a girl. This game teaches relationships as it is meant to teach boys how to play with their wives (mabimbiri kana kutamba nemukadzi mumba) when they get married in the future.

To play 'Tsikidzi muramu,' participants sit on the ground in a big circle. A leader, a boy in this case, is chosen to start the game. He sits at the centre of the circle with a girl at his back. The girl on the back of the leader represents the younger sister of the latter's (leader) wife (muramu). To start the game, the leader sings:

Leader: Tsikidzi muramu

Chorus: Kutsakatika

L: Tsikidzi muramu
 C: Kutsakatika
 L: Ndivate zvaramba
 C: Kutsakatika
 L: Ndipfunye zvanyanya
 C: Kutsakatika
 L: Ndimire zvaramba
 C: Kutsakatika
 L: I-i-i-i muramu
 C: Kutsakatika
 L: Ndiringe muramu
 C: Kutsakatika
 L: Ndikwenye muramu
 C: Kutsakatika
 L: Hauoni muramu!
 C: Kutsakatika
 L: Zvadini muramu
 C: Kutsakatika
 L: Zvanaka muramu
 C: Kutsakatika.

Amai Ndakanaka (Mother I Am Beautiful)

This game was meant to teach obedience and children not to have their attention to be arrested by trivial things i.e. reflections of their images. The game is normally played by a group of children (both boys and girls) near a river, dam or any water reservoir.

To play ‘Amai ndakanaka’ some participants are chosen to play the parts of a father, mother, grandmother, grandfather and daughters. The game is started by the mother who sends her eldest daughter to fetch water from a stream.

When the girl reaches the stream, looks into the clean/undisturbed water and sees her own reflection, she becomes perplexed and moves backwards. On second thoughts, the girl looks again into the water. She instantly starts dancing and singing: 'Amai ndakanaka amai' (Mother I am beautiful). She completely forgets her assignment as she continues singing and dancing. The mother becomes worried and sends her second daughter to find out what has befallen her sister. On reaching the stream and seeing the sister singing and dancing all by herself, the second daughter gets angry with her for betraying her mother. However, a moment after looking into the water, the second daughter too joins her sister singing and dancing forgetting about her assignment as well. The mother sends a third daughter, a fourth until the tenth and last daughter also betrays her. Soon the father sends the mother herself to go and check what has gone wrong with their children. The mother also falls prey as she joins in the singing and dancing. Soon the father, grandmother and grandfather end up at the stream dancing and singing together. The singing and dancing go on until a 'n'anga' (traditional healer) comes at the river and gets rid of the spell that has befallen on the whole family.

Chapter Five

Games That Increase Creativity, Accuracy and Motor skills

In South-eastern Zimbabwe as in many parts of the country and even the world, there were some games meant to sharpen children's intellect as well as promoting their physical strength and determination. All children were expected to develop their intellectual faculties along with their physical growth. This was meant to enable them to stay vigilant and to be able to amicably confront real life problems as they grow up.

While intellect development was an aspect of development encouraged in children of either sex (boys and girls) in the Shona society, physical strength was an aspect of children development encouraged in male children. This was in line with the issue of role play in Zimbabwean traditional culture where men are likely to encounter more situations that require physical strength than women. For instance, men were expected to do all work that required physical power such as construction, and women do all domestic work that required less physical power like washing and cooking.

Children's traditional games that emphasized the sharpening of the intellect and promotion of physical power were and are still many in south-eastern Zimbabwe. They include the following:

Tsoro (Draughts)

'Tsoro' is one of the most ancient African games played in Zimbabwe and many parts of Southern Africa. The game requires some high degree of intelligence and vigilance when

playing it. In fact the players have to think quickly and clearly in order to outwit the opponent. It is normally played by young boys and sometimes young girls, but even adult people also play the game. The game is meant to develop and sharpen the boy child's intellectual faculty such that he grows up with the aptitude to manoeuvre different situations in real life. This is rightly captured by Masuku and Ndawi¹ who pointed out that African children's games with stones such as 'tsoro' can be used to teach counting, number value, estimation and spatial relations. The game has several versions varying from region to region, but all are known by the same name, 'tsoro'.

To play 'Tsoro' (Draughts), a minimum of two people are required although the number of participants can be increased to three or four a side depending on the 'tsoro' version. Traditionally 'tsoro' is played with very simple objects, for example, hard amarula nuts, wild loquats seeds, gourd shells, sticks, corn cobs, stones on the ground surface or in holes on the ground or beans on a cut wooden plate. Nowadays objects such as bottle tops are used to play some of the versions of 'tsoro'.

As previously highlighted, tsoro is a very competitive game played by two adversaries at a time with others watching as audiences. However, in some cases boys would pair up and compete as pairs or even groups. The result can either be a draw or a loss on either part.

Versions of 'Tsoro' Played In South-eastern Zimbabwe

a) Tsoro Yemutatu

One of the versions of 'tsoro' played in south-eastern Zimbabwe is 'tsoro yemutatu'. This version is two-player. The game can be played on a card board box or drawn on the

ground. The board is a triangle with one line across its breadth, and another line running down the length of the board down its central axis. This creates for seven intersection points of which the pieces can be played upon. Each participant/player has 3 pieces, but of different colours from those of the opponent. For instance, one plays black pieces, while the opponent plays white pieces. In order to play this version of 'tsoro', participants take turns to drop their three pieces onto the board before they move them to create a 3 in-a-row. The ultimate objective is to be the first player to have three pieces in a row-to have a 3-in-a-row. One can be said to have won the game if he manages to create the 3-in-a-row or when the opponent no longer has an open space to move any of his three pieces.

b) Tsoro Yemakomba (Tsoro Played In Holes)

This version is also played by two participants/players. In order to play this version of 'tsoro', each player should have two rows of holes. The number of holes in each of the four rows is the same. It is, however, curious to note that this version has several other versions with different numbers of holes in each row. For instance, there are versions with 4 holes, 6 holes, 9 holes, 12 holes and so on. To start the game, all holes contain the same number of pebbles. Normally, each hole contains three pebbles. The holes are arranged in a rectangle with four rows, the first two being allocated to the first player and the last two to the opponent (second player). The number of columns is of course the number of holes (4, 6, 9, 12 and so on) in each row.

c) Tsoro Yemugumi Nembiri

In south-eastern Zimbabwe, this 'tsoro' version has yet two more other versions but played for the same objective,

that is to win the opponent. The idea of this 'tsoro' version is for one player to maximize his number of playing stones (tsoro) and minimize the number of playing stones (tsoro) of the opponent. This version of 'tsoro' can be played by two participants, A and B facing each other, but sometimes players can pair up.

To play 'Tsoro yegumi nembiri,' a square with six vertical lines and the other six horizontal lines is drawn on the ground or a cardboard box. Each player gathers twelve pieces of fruit seeds or stones which are placed on the intersections of the first two lines of the square. The pieces gathered by one player should be of different colour from those of the opponent. Nowadays, bottle tops are used of which the pieces of one player face upside down and those of the other up. To start the game, either player (say A) can move his piece vertically towards the pieces of the opponent. Player B does the same thing until two of the pieces of the players A and B begin attacking each other. The objective of the game is to minimize the opponent's number of pieces. Thus the idea of attacking is to minimize the total number of the opponent's pieces. This means that the winning player is the one left with more pieces at the end of the game.

Nhodo (Jacks)

Traditionally, this game is played by girls and boys rarely play 'nhodo' although nowadays some boys do play. The game teaches counting, addition, subtraction, division, multiplication, accuracy as well as instilling development of motor skills as it requires a lot of concentration and accuracy in order to win or play it correctly. As pointed out by Masuku and Ndawi², and rightly so, common African children's games with stones, such as 'nhodo' can be used to teach counting,

addition, subtraction, sets, division and multiplication. The game is played by a minimum of two participants and normally a maximum of five participants.

To play 'Nhodo,' a hole of about 10cm-15cm in diameter and 5cm-8cm deep is dug on a level ground. Depending on the number of participants and size of the hole, a number of pebbles, for example 20 or 30 are put in the hole. Each participant remains with one extra big pebble known as 'mudodo'. The 'mudodo' is the pebble used by the participants to toss into the air so that while it is still in the air the participant pulls a handful of pebbles from the hole, snatches at least one stone from the whole lot (from those pebbles pulled from the hole) and all others quickly pushed back into it (the hole). This is done using only one hand, and so quickly such that the participant catches the 'mudodo' before it reaches the ground. This means that the participant should be careful not to throw the 'mudodo' too high when tossing. If the participant fails to exhibit all these principles and caution, then she has failed (*atodzva*) and the next participant takes her turn. But if the participant succeeds in the first round to pull a handful of pebbles, snatching one pebble and pushes back all other pebbles while the 'mudodo' is still in the air, then she goes on to do the second round and so on. All participants take turns to do this until all stones gathered in the hole are finished. One is said to win the game if by the time all the pebbles in the hole finish she already has more pebbles than anyone else. The one with least pebbles is the loser.

While 'tsoro' was the game mainly for the boy child, 'nhodo' was the game mainly played by girls, though sometimes boys would also play the game. But, like 'tsoro' nhodo was a competitive game normally meant to develop the art of thinking especially on how to gather for the

children and family. Put differently, it was a ‘game of accumulation’ – a game that prepared the girl child to gather property and food for her future family.

Also, the game emphasized much the aspect of accuracy. In domestic chores that fall within the precincts of female role play in the Zimbabwean traditional culture, accuracy was (and is still) a much needed and cherished value or quality in the execution of duties like cooking, washing and feeding children among many other roles.

One should be reminded that unlike ‘tsoro’ that was played only by two parties/adversaries, *nhodo* was played by more than two people, but normally not more than five people.

***Zvirahwe* (Riddles)**

Riddles like ‘ngano’ (folklore/orature), riddles are played during winter season when there is less work in the fields. They are also played in the evenings so as not to disturb the rhythm of work and chores during the day. Technically, a riddle can be defined as a ‘puzzle or word play.’³ This demonstrates that in order to play riddles, one should be able to exercise some high degree of reasoning. The definition also makes it clear that there is an aspect of recreation in riddles as implied by the word play. This is true of the southeastern people of Zimbabwe and indeed the entire Shona traditional culture where solving a riddle is a source of great intellectual pleasure and pride. In fact riddles are played as a ‘word play’ game in which one child has the opportunity to challenge another. This makes riddles a highly competitive game where the winner is the one who knows more riddles to ask than all others. As noted by Raun⁴ in Gelfand, and rightly so riddles have an educational value because their solutions depend on

the child's ability to provide a relevant answer to the posed riddle. Gelfand concurs with this assertion when he aptly says:

*Findings confirm that this method of instruction (riddles) is useful in forming the memory and reasoning powers of the child. In his attempt to solve the riddles, he has to consider different possibilities and probabilities and through repeated questioning, he comes to know many of what is happening around him.*⁵

To play riddles, a group of young children (from different families) come to gather around a 'village story teller' who is often an elderly and well respected person in that village. The leader can be a woman (grandmother/aunt) or a man (grandfather). Children are asked to form two groups, A and B, before they start the game. One member of a group, say A, poses a riddle to the members of the opposite group, B. Any one from the opposite group (B) can make an attempt to answer the riddle. If they manage to answer it correctly, then group B has one point. Also, they take over to pose a riddle to members of Group A. But if members of group B fails to answer the riddle, then group A has a point. They provide an answer to the riddle and pose another riddle. This goes on until members of the opposite group manage to answer one such that they can take over the lead. It should be remarked that riddles can also be played by only two people, but they play it in a similar manner as explicated above.

The riddles played range from those about natural phenomena, human body, crops, zoological world to objects in general. What is important when playing riddle therefore is to think widely and deeply about the world around you so that you relate the riddle to your experience of that world. For example the riddle 'Mai ndebvu baba ndebvu' (Both

father and mother have beards) forces a child to think of objects and animals around him that have similar features. This animal is a goat. Those who have seen goats might have observed that both females and males have beards. Another riddle 'Nzira mbiri dzinokwira mugomo' (Two pathways going up the mountain) can be given. The answer is 'mhuno' (nose) which has two openings that go up towards the forehead.

It is in view of the above that in the culture of the Shona people in South-eastern Zimbabwe and by extension Zimbabwe as a whole, riddles are an important aspect of education that instils intellectual development of the young children. Adults may test the knowledge of their children by posing riddles for them to answer. It is through riddles that elders provide to their children the platform to reflect on their life settings and experiences as well as the challenges that the people face at a given time.

Nhuri/Nhicha

This game teaches a number of lessons which include throwing, accuracy in aiming, a spirit of team work and muscle co-ordination. The game is normally played by young boys after harvesting time, and girls rarely play it.

To play '*Nhuri*', a melon/pumpkin is sliced into the shape of a wheel. Participants are asked to stand in two groups, A and B holding sharpened sticks or bows and arrows. A participant from one group throws the sliced melon/pumpkin to roll towards the other group who in turn throw their sharpened sticks/arrows in an attempt to pierce the sliced rolling melon/pumpkin while still in motion. This exercise is done in turns by participants of either group. One who manages to pierce the rolling melon/pumpkin while still

in motion is awarded a point. A point is lost if the participant misses the target. In the end, one with more points is considered the winner.

Kana Ndikadai (If I Do This)

This game teaches leadership, social development, advanced creativity as well as muscle co-ordination. The leader has to think quickly and clearly in order to convince other participants that she/he is creative. The game is normally played by young girls although young boys are also allowed to play it if they want.

To play ‘Kana ndikadai’ (If I do this), young girls come together as a group. A leader is chosen. She stands in an opposite direction but facing other participants. The leader performs whatever physical movement she wants. All other participants imitate the movement/action. While performing the action or skill, the leader sings: ‘Kana ndikadai’ (If I do this) and the remainder of the group answer ‘Zvoshamisa’ (It’s amazing). They say these words while imitating the action exhibited by the leader. The leader should not repeat an action she has already done. Once she repeats the same action or pause as a sign of having nothing to exhibit, then she has failed (atodzva). The next participant would take over. The song that is sung while the game progresses is as below:

Leader: Kana ndikadai (If I do this)

Chorus: Zvoshamisa (It’s amazing)

L: Kana ndikadai (If I do this)

C: Zvoshamisa (It’s amazing)

L: Kana ndikadai (If I do this)

C: Zvoshamisa (It’s amazing)

L: Kana ndikadai (If I do this)
C: Zvoshamisa (It's amazing)
L: Kana ndikadai (If I do this)
C: Zvoshamisa (It's amazing)
L: Kana ndikadai (If I do this)
C: Zvoshamisa (It's amazing)
L: Kana ndikadai (If I do this)
C: Zvoshamisa (It's amazing)

The participants rotate at being leaders. The game ends when all participants have taken their turns or when they are now too tired to continue playing it.

Horikotyo

This game is mainly a game as it is normally played by young boys when they are grazing cattle in the pastures. It teaches throwing, muscle development and movement of different parts of the body. In a way, the game is also a training for young boys in preparation for hunting expeditions when they are grown up as it increases the boys' physical fitness and accuracy at shooting/throwing.

To play 'horikotyo', boys come together each with his own throwing club (tsvimbo). One of the boys, usually the oldest, throws his club up into the air and challenges the other participants to hit it before it drops. The one who manages to shoot the club before it lands on the ground has a point. And if the club is missed, the challenger gains the victory. The game continues until the children are tired or no longer want to play the game. However, the one with more points at the time they terminate the game is the winner.

Kuumba (Modelling With Clay)

This game teaches creativity in art and craft. The game is normally played by small boys when grazing cattle.

To do 'Kuumba' (Modelling with clay), boys look around for clay. They model out little animals such as cattle, goats, birds, donkeys, cats and even human beings. These 'clay animals' are then baked by drying them in the sun. This is done to strengthen them such that they can stay longer. The game is somehow competitive as the boy who makes the best animal is greatly admired by others for his creativity. He is looked at by other boys as their superior in art and craft, thus is normally copied by the other boys. In the case of modelled oxen, the boys also make small wooden yokes and sledges before inspanning the clay oxen. This is an imitation of what the young boys see at home when their elders inspan oxen in order to do ploughing and other activities in the fields. The other animals modelled by the boys are also used when the children play 'mahumbwe' (play house), for instance, in paying bride wealth. Others like chickens are 'slaughtered' for 'visitors' during these 'mahumbwe'. Girls can also do modelling, but theirs is normally for kitchen utensils such as clay pots, plates, spoons and cups. The utensils are also used during 'mahumbwe'.

Hondo Yemaonde (War of Figs)

This game teaches determination, endurance, courage, dodging and throwing. The game is normally played by young boys in preparation for 'wars' (for those who will become soldiers) or self-defence in the future (when they grow up).

To play 'Hondo yemaonde' (War of figs), young boys come together and form two groups, A and B. All participants stand in two lines, A and B opposite each other.

Each will be holding a handful of figs or any other soft objects like mushroom used to throw and hit each other. A group is awarded a point if its member throws a fig which hits the participant of the opposite group and vice-versa. The objective of the game is to minimize by way of subtraction the number of participants in the opposite group. This means that a participant falls out of the game as soon as he has been hit. The group with more participants at the end of the game is declared the winner.

Notes

1. Masuku, J. & Ndawi, O. 2001. Incorporating local folklore into the school curriculum in Southern Africa, *Education as change*, 5(1): 85 – 103.
2. Masuku, J. & Ndawi, O. 2001. Incorporating local folklore into the school curriculum in Southern Africa, *Education as change*, 5(1): 85 – 103.
3. Chesina, C. (1994), *Oral Literature of the Kalenjin*, Nairobi: East African Educational Publishers. pp. 14.
4. Gelfand, M. (1979,) *Growing Up in Shona Society From Birth to Marriage*, Gweru: Mambo Press.
5. Gelfand, M. (1979,) *Growing Up in Shona Society From Birth to Marriage*, Gweru: Mambo Press. pp.131.

Chapter Six

Games That Increase Endurance, determination and Physical Fitness

Physical fitness in the Shona traditional culture is greatly valued especially among men. This is because a man who is not strong and enduring is considered unfit for many of the manual activities in and outside home. The importance of physical fitness is also emphasized through proverbial expressions such as ‘Kufa kwemurume kubuda ura’ (A man’s defeat only comes with his death), ‘Wokwa murume ndewe kwamurume’ (A man is a man). These two sayings mean that a man unlike a woman is always expected to be strong and enduring. To be strong and enduring require physical fitness, hence the reason why physical fitness is encouraged and valued or cherished in the Shona traditional culture.

In south-eastern Zimbabwe, I observed that while fighting is greatly discouraged, physical fitness is still a cherished value. Children, especially boys are encouraged to be physically fit through different games that promote muscle development and physical fitness in general. From the way and the reasons most of the children’s traditional games are they are played for in southeastern Zimbabwe, I considered the following games as those played to increase physical fitness of the young:

***Zinyekenyeke* (Which Is the Weakest Point?)**

This game teaches concentration, vigilance, effort through various parts of the body and response to different

stimuli. The game is played by children of either or both sexes together.

To play ‘Zinyekenyeke’ (Which is the weakest point?), children stand on the ground in a big circle joining their hands to form a barrier. Depending on the number of the participants, one or more participants are chosen to enter inside the circle. Those in the ring walk about looking for means to escape out (of the ring) or possibly looking for weaker points through which they can push their way out. If the children manage to push out, they have won and another member or group enters the ring. As those inside the ring move about looking for weaker points where they can escape outside the ring, they sing:

Leader(s): Apa! (Here!)

Chorus: Pakasungwa neutare (It’s strong)

L: Apa! (Here!)

C: Pakasungwa neutare (It’s strong)

L: Apa! (Here!)

C: Zinyekenyeke (It’s weak)

L: Apa! (Here!)

C: Zinyekenyeke (It’s weak)

L: Apa! (Here!)

C: Zinyekenyeke (It’s weak)

L: Apa! (Here!)

C: Zinyekenyeke (It’s weak)

L: Apa! (Here!)

C: Zinyekenyeke (It’s weak)

It should be noted that those at the points at which those inside the ring escaped outside would be laughed at. In most cases, these are the ones who would be chosen to enter inside the ring and restart the game.

Mukuru Ndiani Jongwe (Cock Fight)

This game teaches balancing, perseverance, courage as well as transferring weight from one body part to another. The game is normally played by young boys, and girls rarely play it. Like the game called ‘ngunzi’, this game is a pushing contest between two participants.

To play ‘Mukuru ndiani Jongwe’ (Cock fight), a big circle (ring) is drawn on the ground surface. Two participants enter inside the ring with their hands folded (at their chests) and standing on one leg. They begin pushing each other with shoulders interlocked while standing on one leg. A point is lost if a participant drops the other leg in attempt to gain balance or if one is pushed back beyond an agreed land mark, that is, out of the ring. As the game progresses, audiences and participants sing:

Leader: Mukuru ndiani? (Who is superior?)

Chorus: Jongwe Jongwe mukuru (Cock is superior)

L: Mukuru ndiani (Who is superior?)

C: Jongwe jongwe mukuru (Cock is superior)

L: Mukuru ndiani (Who is superior?)

C: Jongwe jongwe mukuru (Cock is superior)

L: Mukuru ndiani (Who is superior?)

C: Jongwe jongwe mukuru (Cock is superior)

L: Mukuru ndiani (Who is superior?)

C: Jongwe jongwe mukuru (Cock is superior)

L: Mukuru ndiani (Who is superior?)

C: Jongwe jongwe mukuru (Cock is superior)

L: Mukuru ndiani (Who is superior?)

C: Jongwe jongwe mukuru (Cock is superior)

L: Mukuru ndiani (Who is superior?)

C: Jongwe jongwe mukuru (Cock is superior)

L: Mukuru ndiani (Who is superior?)

C: Jongwe jongwe mukuru (Cock is superior)

L: Mukuru ndiani (Who is superior?)

C: Jongwe jongwe mukuru (Cock is superior)

Ngunzi/Mombe-mombe (Bull Fighting)

This game is normally played by young boys in the pastures as they will be grazing cattle, but can also be played at home and together with girls. The game teaches muscle co-ordination, courage, determination, weight transference and effort through various parts of the body. It also teaches discipline and good morals/behaviour. This is because the game can easily turn into a 'real fight' if there is no honest observance of the rules of the game.

To play 'Ngunzi' (Bull fight), two children of the same age group come together and draw a big circle on the ground surface. Two participants enter the ring, kneel on the ground and start pushing each other using their shoulders. When played in the pastures, the game can be a contest between boys from different villages (inter-village). During the game, the necks and shoulders of the competitors are inter-locked while they kneel on all on the ground with their palms spread on the ground. For one to win the game he should push the opponent backwards. For example, if one is pushed one step back he loses a point. A participant totally loses the game if he is pushed out of the confined area (ring) within which they are contesting.

Nhanzva/Mutserendende (Rock Sliding)

This game teaches balance and helps children to develop strong muscles - it trains physical fitness. The game is normally played by young boys as they will be grazing their cattle in the mountains/hills. It is a fairly risk game and so the children playing it should learn to carefully distribute their weight (force) using their body muscles. The game can be played by one person, but for it to be more fun a number of children should come together to play the game.

To play 'Nhanzva' (Rock sliding), a participant sits on a fairly thick branch of a plant called 'Munhanzva,' hence the name of the game 'Nhanzva'. The plant has slippery sap which can easily slip when the branch is rubbed against a rock surface. Once the participant secures a 'Nhanzva' branch he gets to a higher surface of a 'ruware' (rock surface). The participant sits on the 'Nhanzva' branch and starts sliding down the rock surface until he reaches the bottom of the rock. To avoid hurting, the participant uses both hands and legs to control his speed and balance. The game ends when the participant(s) are tired of playing it.

Mutsimba (Wrestling)

This is a game that is normally played by young boys. As a wrestling contest, the game teaches many lessons. For example, it teaches balancing, breathing control, emotional development and co-ordination of body muscles. The game is usually played by two contests.

To play 'Mutsimba' (Wrestling), two contests enter the 'ring', that is, the confined space. They start pushing, pressing and lifting each other. Strict rules are observed here and opponents are required to control their emotions, lest the

game breaks into a 'real' fight. The one who manages to overpower his opponent by keeping him pressed to the ground is considered the winner. The game can start over again if the opponents agree that they still want to play the game.

***Chamukamhina* (One Legged Man)**

This game is normally played by boys only although there are no restrictions on sex that can play it. The game teaches balancing, movement of different body parts as well as muscle development; it is a form of gymnastics. Gymnastics can be understood as skills and techniques of managing body's weight by transferring and supporting activities such as balancing, rolling, running or exertion of weight on one part of the body. Besides, the game teaches endurance and balance.

To play 'Chamukamhina' (One legged man), children gather at one place. They can either compete at once or they take turns to play the game. The one playing stand on one leg, the other leg being folded backwards, and begin circulating a confined object, for example, a round hut. The one who circulates more times (than others) before dropping down the other leg is the winner. As the participant circulates, he sings:

Leader: Chamukamhina (One legged man)

Chorus: Gumbo rakatswa (The other leg burnt)

L: Chamukamhina (One legged man)

C: Gumbo rakatsva (The other leg burnt)

L: Chamukamhina (One legged man)

C: Gumbo rakatsva (The other leg burnt)

L: Chamukamhina (One legged man)

C: Gumbo rakatsva (The other leg burnt)

L: Chamukamhina (One legged man)
 C: Gumbo rakatsva (The other leg burnt)
 L: Chamukamhina (One legged man)
 C: Gumbo rakatsva (The other leg burnt)
 L: Chamukamhina (One legged man)
 C: Gumbo rakatsva (The other leg burnt)
 L: Chamukamhina (One legged man)
 C: Gumbo rakatsva (The other leg burnt)
 L: Chamukamhina (One legged man)
 C: Gumbo rakatsva (The other leg burnt)

Chamuninga

This game teaches balance and trains children to remain physically fit. This game is played by children of either or both sexes together.

To play ‘chamuninga,’ a rope is made using local material. Two participants are chosen to hold the ends of the rope, one holding on this end and the second participant on the other end. The rope is held in such a way that it is level with the average height of the participants taking part in the game. A third participant is chosen to hope towards the rope as the first two participants will be hoping the rope up and down. Participants can also enter in pairs. The rest of the participants stand in a single file about three metres away from the rope watching and waiting for their turns. One after the other, they hope towards the rope and under it with their backs tilted and arms stretched out. As the game progresses, the level of the rope is lowered until it is difficult to hope under it. While the game progresses, the participants chant the following song:

Leader: Riri riri riri! (This is a crying sound)
 Chorus: Chamuninga! (Chamuninga)
 L: Riri riri riri! (This is a crying sound)
 C: Chamuninga! (Chamuninga)
 L: Hama dzangu dzakapera kufa (All my relatives are dead)
 C: Riri riri riri Chamuninga!
 L: Amai vangu ndovaisa pai? (Where can I put my mother?)
 C: Riri riri riri Chamuninga! (Chamuninga).
 L: Baba vangu ndovaisa pai? (Where can I put my father?)
 C: Riri riri riri Chamuninga! (Chamuninga).
 L: Mbuya vangu ndovaisa pai? (Where can I put my grandma?)
 C: Riri riri riri Chamuninga! (Chamuninga).

***Mai Vachigere Danda* (Mother is Still Seated on the Log)**

This game teaches concentration, balance, movement in own space as well as fast and slow movements. As the name suggests ‘Mai vachigere danda’ (Mother is still seated on the log), the game is normally played by girls. It can, however, be played by boys as well.

To play ‘Mai vachigere danda’ (Mother is still seated on the log), a minimum of three participants and two strong poles are required. The participants should be strong enough to balance the poles. To start the game, one girl stand with her feet astride on the two poles while they (the poles) are resting on the ground. When the girl feels she is well balanced on the poles, she gives a signal to the two girls that they can now lift the lying poles. The two girls carefully lift the poles from the ground making sure that they don’t shake them. When the poles are now at waist height, they move the poles

forwards and backwards at the same time. As they do these movements, they sing the following song:

Leader: Mai vachigere danda (Mother is still seated on the log)

Chorus: Chigere danda chigere (Yes I am still seated)

L: Mai vachigere danda (Mother is still seated on the log)

C: Chigere danda chigere (Yes I am still seated)

L: Mai vachigere danda (Mother is still seated on the log)

C: Chigere danda chigere (Yes I am still seated)

L: Mai vachigere danda (Mother is still seated on the log)

C: Chigere danda chigere (Yes I am still seated)

L: Mai vachigere danda (Mother is still seated on the log)

C: Chigere danda chigere (Yes I am still seated)

L: Mai vachigere danda (Mother is still seated on the log)

C: Chigere danda chigere (Yes I am still seated)

L: Mai vachigere danda (Mother is still seated on the log)

C: Chigere danda chigere (Yes I am still seated)

L: Mai vachigere danda (Mother is still seated on the log)

C: Chigere danda chigere (Yes I am still seated)

As soon as the participant standing on the poles falls down, 'atodzva' (she has failed), and another one will take her turn.

Mudhongi (Kicking Donkeys)

This game teaches dodging, discipline, kicking and development of leg muscles. The game is normally played by young boys (and not girls) who pretend to be donkeys or zebras which use their hind legs to kick. It is somehow risk and requires observance of some high degree of discipline amongst participants. Otherwise, a real fight breaks out between the participants.

To play 'Mudhongi' (Kicking donkeys), a minimum of two participants is required. Sometimes the game is played as contest between two villages (A and B). One participant, say from village A, may start by provoking participants of the other group (group B) saying: 'Imi mose kusiya kwaJojo muri vakadzi. Unoti pwe-e ngaauye pamberi apa tikavane' (All of you except Jojo are women. Anyone who is angered can come up front and let's kick each other). If any of those in group B feel challenged, he comes upfront and says: 'Ehe-e, huya tikavane. Hapana mukadzi wako pano' (Yes, come let's kick each other. No one is your wife here). The participants pretend to be zebras or donkeys such that once the game starts, they begin to kick each other using their hind legs. The opponent should dodge and in turn give a kick as well. During the kicking, other boys (spectators) jeer and cheer. They jump up and down in excitement if they see that their group member is winning. The one who is kicked most is the loser. The loser is often scolded and mocked with all kinds insulting words like: 'Uri mbodza chaiyo' (You are really a half backed stiff porridge) or 'Haubatsiri' (You are useless).

Maonde (Tug-Of-War)

This is a tug-of-war contest between two participants. The game teaches group formation, balance, endurance, discipline, determination and physical fitness in general. The game is played by young children of either or both sexes together.

To play 'Maonde' (Tug-of-war), young children of either or both sexes come together. They divide themselves into two groups, A and B of equal number. The two groups, A and B stand in two rows facing each other. A line is marked on the ground surface between the two groups. One

group (A) stands about 2-3m to the right of the marked line. The other group (B), stands an equal distance away (to the left) from the marked line. The first group (A) starts the game by singing while walking back and forth towards the marked line. As soon as group A does this, group B follows suit. After a moment of singing, two participants chosen by both groups (A and B) each place one foot on the marked line, hold hands tightly and start pulling each other. A participant pulled across the marked line by her opponent becomes part of the opponent's group. For instance, if Tendai who belongs to group A is pulled across the marked line by Sarudzai who belongs to group B, the former becomes part of the latter. The game goes on until it one group is left without members. The group that manages to maximize its number by way of pulling in members of the opposite group is the winner. While the game progresses, participants sing the following song:

Group A: Tinotsvaka Maonde Maonde Maonde!

Tinotsvaka Maonde masikati ano! (We are looking for Maonde this afternoon!)

Group B: Wamunotsvaka ndiani ndiani ndiani?

Wamunotsvaka ndiani masikati ano! (Who are you looking for this afternoon?)

Group A: Tinotsvaka Tendai Tendai Tendai!

Tinotsvaka Tendai masikati ano! (We are looking for Tendai this afternoon!)

Group B: Tinotsvaka Maonde Maonde Maonde!

Tinotsvaka Maonde masikati ano! (We are looking for Maonde this afternoon!)

Group A: Wamunotsvaka ndiani ndiani ndiani!

Wamunotsvaka ndiani masikati ano! (Who are you looking for this afternoon?).

Group B: Tinotsvaka Sarudzai Sarudzai Sarudzai!

Tinotsvaka Sarudzai masikati ano! (We are looking for Sarudzai this afternoon!)

Both groups (A and B): Ngavapinde tione tione tione!

Ngavapinde tione masikati ano! (Let them in and let us see the duel this afternoon!).

As soon as both groups say 'Ngavapinde tione tione tione! Ngavapinde tione masikati ano!' (Let them in and let us see the duel this afternoon!) the chosen participants (those with names called out) get to the marked line, hold each other's hand and begin a tug-of-war until either of them is pulled across the line.

Chihwerure

This game teaches different ways of moving body parts such as twisting, pulling and thrusting. It also helps development of the muscles of small fingers. The game is normally played by young boys although girls sometimes play it. 'Chihwerure' can be played by one or more participants. Where the participants are many, they can take turns to see who play the game best of all. Alternatively, each participant uses his own 'chihwerure'. It should be noted that 'chihwerure' is also a name given to the licence to poke fun, lampoon, satirize and criticize at beer threshing parties (jakwara) without fear of being taken to court. Here I am concerned with 'chihwerure' as a game played by young children.

To play 'Chihwerure', a string of approximately fifty to sixty centimetres in length is threaded into shells of a fruit tree called 'mutamba'. Nowadays children use bottle tops in place of 'matamba' shells. After threading the string through the bottle tops, the tstring is twisted before it is pulled in and out.

***Musvetu/Kuuruka* (High Jump)**

This game teaches determination, instils a spirit of competition and develops body muscles. The game is normally played by boys although girls sometimes take part. It is usually played when the boys are grazing the cattle.

To play the game, the boys being led by the eldest and most experienced boy elect two marked poles or a post similar to a football goal post. This is erected at a height of about half a metre, one metre, one and a half metre. The first marked point (that of about half a metre) is considered the starting point within the ability of all participants. The boys run and jump in turn. When all the participants have jumped the starting point - an exercise known as 'warm up,'- they raise the crossing bar to the height marked next and repeat the same exercise. The one who jumps the highest point is considered the best jumper. The high-jumping contest is sometimes between boys from different villages (inter-village contest) grazing their cattle together. The village that happens to have the best jumper is the winner.

Chapter Seven

Games to Remember Names

These games were meant to sharpen memory skills in children. Given that long ago, the tradition of writing was alien to the Zimbabwean traditional culture, children were trained to master their environment i.e. the names of things that surround them by memory. Names of the things they were required to know were those of rivers, trees, animals, people and birds, among many other things. For instance, children were required to know all the names of the trees that were found in their locality.

In most cases, games to remember names of things were played as songs and it is in these songs that the names of the things would feature. The games included:

***Du-du muduri* (Guess What His Name Is)**

This game is meant to teach children to know and remember names of people found in their culture. It also teaches rhythmic patterns and verbal tasks that help them to acquire linguistic jargon of their vernacular language easily.

To play 'Du-du muduri' (Guess what his name is), children sit on the ground surface in a group. A leader is chosen, although this done in turns. S/he leads the game, that is, in singing the names of people while others respond 'Katswe'. The leading child thus would say out as many names (of people found in her culture) as s/he can remember. S/he would start:

Leader: Du-du muduri

Chorus: Katswe

L: Farai muduri

C: Katswe

L: Taurai muduri

C: Katswe

L: Kumbirai muduri

C: Katswe

L: Tonderai muduri

C: Katswe

L: Tinashe muduri

C: Katswe

L: Chipso muduri

C: Katswe

L: Pedzisai muduri

***Zengera Uyo Mutii?* (Guess What Tree Is That)**

This game was meant to teach children their biological environment, and in particular to know and remember names of trees found in their geographical locations. In this game, children of the same age group gather at one point/locality, normally around an elderly person who is well versed with the geography of the area. They take turns to sing the names of trees they know and remember. Once the leading child takes some time i.e. a few minutes before remembering the name of any tree found in their locality, s/he has failed. The other participants simply count the number of trees s/he has remembered before the next child takes over the lead. After everyone has participated, they would check for the one with the highest number of trees. The one with the highest number of trees would be considered the winner in that

round. The song that is sung as the game progresses is this below:

Chorus: Do-do, zengera uyo mutii? (Do-do, zengera what tree is that one?)

Leader: Mutondo sengurudze paya kuti tsve-e (It is a mutondo there you are)

C: Do-do, zengera uyo mutii? (Do-do, zengera what tree is that one?)

L: Mupfuti sengurudze paya kuti tsve-e (It is a mupfuti there you are)

C: Do-do, zengera uyo mutii? (Do-do, zengera what tree is that one?)

L: Murwiti sengurudze paya kuti tsve-e (It is a murwiti there you are)

C: Do-do do, zengera uyo mutii? (Do-do, zengera what tree is that one?)

L: Mumvee sengurudze paya kuti tsve-e (It is a mumvee there you are)

C: Do-do, zengera uyo mutii? (Do-do, zengera what tree is that one?)

L: Mupangara sengurudze paya kuti tsve-e (It is a mupangara there you are)

C: Do-do, zengera uyo mutii? (Do-do, zengera what tree is that one?)

L: Munyii sengurudze paya kuti tsve-e (It is a munyii there you are)

C: Do-do do, zengera uyo mutii? (Do-do, zengera what tree is that one?)

L: Mushuku sengurudze paya kuti tsve-e (It is a mushuku there you are)

C: Do-do, zengera uyo mutii? (Do-do, zengera what tree is that one?)

L: Mutsvindingari sengurudze paya kuti tsve-e (It is a mutsvindingari there you are)

C: Do-do, zengera uyo mutii? (Do-do, zengera what tree is that one?)

L: Munzviri sengurudze paya kuti tsve-e (It is a munzviri there you are)

C: Do-do do, zengera uyo mutii? (Do-do, zengera what tree is that one?)

L: Muonde sengurudze paya kuti tsve-e (It is a muonde there you are)

C: Do-do, zengera uyo mutii? (Do-do, zengera what tree is that one?)

L: Mushumha sengurudze paya kuti tsve-e (It is a mushumha there you are)

C: Do-do, zengera uyo mutii? (Do-do, zengera what tree is that one?)

L: Mushavhi sengurudze paya kuti tsve-e (It is a mushavhi there you are)

C: Do-do do, zengera uyo mutii? (Do-do, zengera what tree is that one?)

L: Mutohwe sengurudze paya kuti tsve-e (It is a mutohwe there you are)

Haiwa Ndoziva (Yes I Know)

This game teaches history and relations. For young children, such lessons are extremely important as they should know that in their social order, they have relations such as father (baba), brother (mukoma), sister (vakoma), mother (mai), grandfather (sekuru), grandmother (mbuya) and many others. To easily remember such relations and know many others they were not aware of, children were encouraged to mention/record them in form of songs.

To play 'Haiwa ndoziva' (Yes I know), young children of the same locality come together, usually at the homestead of a 'sarungano' (story teller). One after the other, the children take turns to lead in the singing or mentioning of their relations. If the one taking the lead repeats a relation or takes some time before mentioning a relation, s/he has failed (unenge wadzva). The next child would take over. The leader starts off by saying:

Leader: Baba ndoziva (Father, I know)

Chorus: Usachema iwe (Cry not)

L: Mainini ndoziva (I know aunt/mother-in-law)

C: Usachema iwe (Cry not)

L: Sekuru ndoziva (I know uncle/grandfather)

C: Usachema iwe (Cry not)

L: Mbuya ndoziva (I know grandmother)

C: Usachema iwe (Cry not)

L: Muzukuru ndoziva (I know nephew)

C: Usachema iwe (Cry not)

L: Vatete ndoziva (I know aunt)

C: Usachema iwe (Cry not)

Tsatsa Ndikatsa

This game is played by children of either or both sexes together. The game teaches names of rivers, memorizing techniques and geography of the surrounding area.

To play the game, children of the same age group gather at one place – normally the homestead of a village story teller. One after the other, the children lead in the singing as s/he tells others (her/his audiences) names of rivers s/he knows and remembers. When the leader no longer remembers any name, s/he has failed (anenge adzva). The other child from

those seated will take over the lead singing the same song as below:

Leader: Tsatsa ndikatsa ndika

Chorus: Ndikatsa

L: Limpopo ndikatsa ndika

C: Ndikatsa

L: Zambezi ndikatsa ndika

C: Ndikatsa

C: Save ndikatsa ndika

L: Ndikatsa

C: Gande ndikatsa ndika

L: Ndikatsa

C: Miyiche ndikatsa ndika

L: Ndikatsa

C: Musaizi ndikatsa ndika

L: Ndikatsa

Bata Musoro (Touch Your Head)

This game teaches human anatomy (all body parts of a human being) and concentration. It is played by children of either or both sexes together.

To play 'Bata musoro' (Touch your head), a leader is chosen. The leader gives instructions, for example, 'Bata musoro' (Touch your head). While the game progresses, the participants say out different words which coincide with what the leader instructs to touch. The song goes:

Leader: Bata musoro (Touch your head)

Chorus: Uyu (Here I have touched it)

L: Umwe wacho (What about the other one?)

C: Hapana (None existent)

L: Bata zheve (Touch your ear)
 C: Iyi (Here I have touched it)
 L: Imwe yacho? (What about the other one?)
 C: Iyi (Here I have touched it)
 L: Bata gumbo (Touch your leg)
 C: Iri (Here I have touched it)
 L: Rimwe racho? (What about the other one?)
 C: Iri (Here I have touched it)
 L: Bata mhino (Touch your nose)
 C: Iyi (Here I have touched it)
 L: Imwe yacho? (What about the other one?)
 C: Hapana (None existent)
 L: Bata Ruoko (Touch arm)
 C: Urwu (Here I have touched it)
 L: Rumwe rwacho? (What about the other one?)
 C: Urwu (Here I have touched it)
 L: Bata ibvi (Touch your knee)
 C: Iri (Here I have touched it)
 L: Rimwe racho (What about the other one?)
 C: Iri (Here I have touched it).

Gumbe-kumbe

This game teaches children to know names of the totems in their culture and how those to totems should be respected.

To play 'Gumbe-kumbe,' children of either or both sexes come together. One participant is chosen to start naming the totems without pausing or stammering. A pause or stammer automatically disqualifies the participant. While the song progresses, the children chant the following song:

Leader: Gumbekumbe-we kumbi

Chorus: Kamutambo kari pano-we kamutambo

L: Hekani shava shava shava
 C: Kamutambo kari pano-we kamutambo
 L: Hekani shumba shumba shumba
 C: Kamutambo kari pano-we kamutambo
 L: Hekani moyo moyo moyo
 C: Kamutambo kari pano-we kamutambo
 L: Hekani gumbo gumbo gumbo
 C: Kamutambo kari pano-we kamutambo
 L: Hekani shiri shiri shiri
 C: Kamutambo kari pano-we kamutambo
 L: Hekani mhofu mhofu mhofu
 C: Kamutambo kari pano-we kamutambo
 L: Hekani duve duve duve
 C: Kamutambo kari pano-we kamutambo
 L: Hekani ngara ngara ngara
 C: Kamutambo kari pano-we kamutambo
 L: Hekani dziva dziva dziva
 C: Kamutambo kari pano-we kamutambo

Njiva Yaitenderera (The Dove Was Flying Round and Round)

This game teaches (good) relations, respect, socialization, singing and dancing. The game is played by both boys and girls together.

To play 'Njiva yaitenderera' (The dove was flying round and round), children stand in pairs, normally a boy and a girl, in a big circle. Each pair will be about 2-3 metres from the next pair. One of the participants (usually a girl) is chosen to start the game, and as the game progresses s/he sings the following song:

Leader: Njiva njiva iyo! (There is a dove)

Chorus: Yaitenderera (It was flying round and round)

L: Njiva njiva iyo (There is a dove)

C: Ah, yaitenderera (Ah, it was flying round and round)

L: Ava ndiambuya (Over here is your mother-in-law)

C: Ah, yaitenderera (Ah, it was flying round and round)

L: Ava ndisahwira (Over here is your friend)

C: Ah, yaitenderera (Ah, it was flying round and round)

When the leader says: 'Ava ndiambuya' (Over here is your mother-in-law), all the participants kneel down and clap their hands in the customary Shona style of showing respect to mothers-in-law. They would sing for some minutes knelt around the participant pointed as 'Ambuya' (mother-in-law). After some time they jump to their feet and start circling again. When the leader reaches the participant considered 'sahwira' (a friend), s/he says: 'Ava ndivasahwira' (Over here is your friend). Once s/he says this, the pairs part each other's back dancing indicating friendliness. Children can stop the game as soon as they feel tired or if they want to play a different one.

***Ndiani Mushava?* (Who Is Light Brown In Complexion?)**

This game trains a child to remember names of people found in his/her culture. The game is played by children of either or both sexes together.

To play 'Ndiani Mushava' (Who is light brown in completion), a group of children should come together. They can either sit on the ground or stand joining their hands. One participant is chosen to stand inside the ring and start counting the names of the people s/he remembers without pausing or stammering. A pause or stammer automatically disqualifies the participant. As soon the first participant is disqualified, the next participant is given a chance until all

have had their turn. As the game progresses, a song is chanted:

Group: Ndianiko mushava ane ndoro/ndarira (Who is light brown in complexion with a mark/copper wire)

Participant: Mushava (The one who is light brown in complexion)

G: Ndianiko mushava ane ndoro/ndarira (Who is light brown in complexion with a mark/copper wire)

P: Mushava (The one who is light brown in complexion)

G: Ndianiko mushava ane ndoro/ndarira (Who is light brown in complexion with a mark/copper wire)

P: Mushava (The one who is light brown in complexion)

G: Ndianiko mushava ane ndoro/ndarira (Who is light brown in complexion with a mark/copper wire)

P: Rudo mushava ane ndoro (Rudo is the one who is light brown in complexion)

G: Ndianiko mushava ane ndoro/ndarira (Who is light brown in complexion with a mark/copper wire)

P: Tendai mushava ane ndoro (Tendai is the one who is light brown in complexion)

G: Ndianiko mushava ane ndoro/ndarira (Who is light brown in complexion with a mark/copper wire)

P: Sarudzai mushava ane ndoro (Sarudzai is the one who is light brown in complexion).

Nzou Tiza Wakaringa Zuva (Elephant Run Eastwards)

This game teaches the geography of the land, in particular the names of mountains in a particular geographical area. The game is played by children of either or both sexes together.

To play 'Nzou tiza wakaringa zuva' (Elephant run eastwards), young boys and girls gather around a leader who may be the most senior and experienced child. They take

turns to say out the names of mountains they know. The participant who mentions more names than all others is the winner. While the game progresses, the participants chant the following song:

Leader: Nzou tiza wakaringa zuva kuna mambo,
Kilimanjaro

Chorus: Ho, iye kiringindi kuna mambo

L: Nyanga

C: Ho, iye kiringindi kuna mambo

L: Mt Everest

C: Ho, iye kiringindi kuna mambo

L: Table Mountain

C: Ho, iye kiringindi kuna mambo

L: Mt Binga

C: Ho, iye kiringindi kuna mambo

L: Chimanmani

C: Ho, iye kiringindi kuna mambo

L: Chinhoyi

C: Ho, iye kiringindi kuna mambo

One is disqualified as soon s/he pauses, stammers or stops. The one who have mentioned more mountains is the winner.

Chinungu

This game teaches names of places and the names of people occupying that place/geographical location. The game thus instils in young children the intellectual capacity to memorise things. The game is played by both boys and girls.

To play ‘Chinungu’, young children come together. *Chinungu* is an animal similar to a pangolin (haka/harakabvuka), but has sharp pointed feathers which it

uses (throws to the enemy) for self-defence. When playing the game, 'chinngu' children take turns to mention places they know and the people who occupy those places. While a participant names the places and the names of people, the following song is sung:

Leader: Chinungu! (An animal with arrow-like features)

Chorus: Kanda museve! (Throw your arrow!)

L: Duma-VaDuma (Duma - The Duma people)

C: Kanda museve! (Throw your arrow!)

L: Dande-VaDande (Dande - The Dande people)

C: Kanda museve (Throw your arrow)

L: Mbire-VaMbire (Mbire - The Mbire people)

C: Kanda museve (Throw your arrow)

L: Bunji-VaBunji (Bunji - The Bunji people)

C: Kanda museve (Throw your arrow)

L: Bocha-VaBocha (Bocha - The Bocha people)

C: Kanda museve (Throw your arrow)

L: Uhera-VaHera (Uhera - The Hera people)

C: Kanda museve (Throw your arrow)

L: Gova-VaGova (Gova - The Gova people)

C: Kanda museve (Throw your arrow)

L: Urozvi-VaRozvi (Rozvi - The Rozvi people)

C: Kanda museve (Throw your arrow)

L: Manyika-VaNyika (Manyika - The Manyika people)

It is important to note that this game is highly competitive. As such, the participant who mentions more places and their people is the winner.

Chapter Eight

Games That Teach Vigilance, Co-ordination and Safety Rules

In the Shona traditional culture, whenever children assembled to play children's traditional games, they chose a leader (normally the eldest child) for guidance, to ensure the enforcement of discipline and the observance of safety rules. Besides, there were/are games that teach vigilance, co-ordination or safety rules per se. This means that traditionally, the three aspects (vigilance, co-ordination and safety rules) were not taught at school (as there were no formal schools in Shona traditional culture), but informally through children's traditional games. From my research in southeastern Zimbabwe, I observed that there are a number of such games. Some of the games that emphasized vigilance, co-ordination and safety rules are these below:

Mapere (Hyenas)

The theme of this game is about a parent who has the obligation to protect her/his children from danger i.e. predators. In this case, a mother has to protect her children from a rampaging hyena. The game therefore teaches responsibility, ethics of care, vigilance, dodging and concentration.

To play 'Mapere' (Hyenas), one participant (normally the oldest girl participant) is chosen to play the part of a mother. Another participant (normally the oldest boy) is chosen to play the part of a hyena. All the other participants are chosen to play the part of the children who wants to be protected.

The mother stands on one side facing her children. The hyena will be on the opposite side but middle way between the mother and the children. As soon as the mother calls 'Vanangu' (My children), all children answer 'Mha-a' (Mother) while at the same time run towards their mother. Each of the children should be careful to make sure that s/he is not caught along the way by the hyena. Those caught will cease to be children, but are now on the side of the hyena helping him to catch more children as the game progresses. The song that accompanies the games is this below:

Mother: Vanangu! (My children!)

Children: Mha-a! (Mother!)

M: Huyai! (Come!)

C: Tinotya! (We are afraid!)

M: Munotyei? (What are you afraid of?)

C: Mapere! (Hyenas!)

M: Mapere akapera kare kare! (All hyenas migrated from this area!)

C: He-e-e! (Noise as children rush to their mother)

As soon as the mother says: 'Mapere akapera kare kare' (All hyenas migrated from this area), all the children run towards their mother. The game ends as soon as the last child reaches the mother or is caught by the hyena. The mother would change the position and continue with the game. Children can continue playing the game as long as they don't feel tired.

Havo Vanhu/Ona Vanhu (Check Those People)

This game is played by children of either or both sexes together. It teaches discipline, questioning and observation.

‘Havo vanhu’ can be played with a minimum of one participant (as a song) or maximum of ten participants. The game can be played while children are seated, kneeling or standing side by side. It is played in two ways. First, the singer would have to sing alone, that is, doing the questioning and answering by oneself. In other instances, the singers would sing and others follow:

Leader: Havo vanhu, havo vanhu-we!

Chorus: Kamwe kakati: Vaneiko! Vaneiko-we?

L: Kamwe kakati: Vane tsenza vane tsenza-we!

C: Kamwe kakati: Kumbira tipiwewo!

L: Kamwe kakati: Hatiroiwi here?

C: Kamwe kakati: Uroyi hwacho huripayi?

L: Kamwe kakati: Huri mudukuduri

C: Kamwe kakati: Dukuduri wakafa

L: Kamwe kakati: Haagarwi nhaka-su?

C: Kamwe kakati: Kuita magarirei?

L: Kamwe kakati: Simuka tiende-we

C: Kamwe kakati: Tiende kupiko-wo?

L: Kamwe kakati: Tiende tindoona uviri-viri hunoenda gova.

As soon as children say: ‘tiende tindoona uviri-viri hunoenda gova’, they leave the scene.

Gondo Guru (Big Eagle)

This game teaches children the obligation of a parent, that is, to ensure security of his/her children. In this case a hen is protecting her chicks from the rampaging eagle. The game is played in the same way as ‘mapere’ explained in the preceding paragraphs. The lessons for this game are also similar to those mentioned under ‘mapere’.

To play 'Gondo guru' (Big eagle), one participant is chosen to play the part of a hen, another that of an eagle, and all other participants play the part of chicks. After the selection, all the 'chicks' (participants playing the role of chicks) stand in a row holding onto each other by the waist. The mother (hen) stands up front, and the eagle middle way between the 'chicks' and the 'hen'. When the 'eagle' comes the 'hen' runs around her 'chicks' with 'wings' (hands) stretched out to prevent the bird from snatching her 'chicks'. The game is accompanied by the following song:

Eagle: Chitiyo changu (My chick)

Mother: Hu-u (Yes)

E: Chandakasiya (Which I left)

M: hu-u (Yes)

E: Musi weguti (On the day there was drizzle)

M: hu-u (Yes)

E: Nhasi ndochida (Today I want it)

All: Manhanga (children would fall on the ground).

As soon as the eagle says: 'Nhasi ndochida' (Today I want it), all the chicks (children) would fall on the ground. The chick (child) caught by the eagle before taking cover (falling on the ground) is taken away by the eagle.

Wenga/Hwerahwe

This is a game that trains coordination and vigilance in children. The game is played by children of either or both sexes together.

To play 'Wenga,' children kneel on the ground surface in a big circle or a straight line with their heads facing in front. A leader is chosen, and each participant will be having a small

stone (in one of his/her hands) which s/he passes on to the next person in as fast as possible. The one who remains with many stones in front of him loses the game, is disqualified and laughed at by others. As the game progresses, the participants chant the following song:

Leader: Wenga wenga-we

Chorus: Ah, wenga

L: Dzaperera, dzaperera-dzaperera-we

C: Ah, wenga

L: Dzaperera, dzaperera- dzaperera-we ndeya

C: Ah, wenga

L: Dzaperera, dzaperera- dzaperera-we ndeya

C: Ah, wenga

L: Dzaperera, dzaperera- dzaperera-we ndeya

C: Ah, wenga

L: Dzaperera, dzaperera- dzaperera-we ndeya

C: Ah, wenga.

Zai Raora (Rotten Egg)

This game teaches vigilance in children. The game ‘Zai rakaora’ (Rotten egg) is also called ‘Tarisayi mukati’ (Look inside) in some parts of South-eastern Zimbabwe. In fact though the games have different names and songs, they are played in exactly the same way.

To play ‘Zai raora,’ children sit on the ground surface in a big circle while facing inside. A leader is chosen. S/he stands outside the ring holding a conspicuous object such as a stick or a stone. Those seated in the circle should never look around. The leader aims at placing the conspicuous object behind a seated participant without attracting the attention of that participant. If the seated participant discovers the object has been placed behind him, s/he gives chance to the leader

in an attempt to catch him/her before completing a round. If the leader succeeds in making a complete round with the seated participant noticing the object behind him/her the latter is told to sit inside the ring. S/he signifies a rotten egg that no longer deserves staying with the others. If the participant who was giving the chase catches the leader before completing a round, the former becomes the new leader and the former leader sits inside the circle. As the leader runs around the outer side of the ring, s/he chants the song 'Zai raora'. The song goes:

Leader: Zai raora! (The egg has rotten)

Chorus: Zai! (Egg)

L: Zai raora! (The egg has rotten)

C: Zai! (Egg)

L: Zai raora! (The egg has rotten)

C: Zai! (Egg)

L: Zai raora! (The egg has rotten)

C: Zai! (Egg)

L: Zai raora! (The egg has rotten)

C: Zai! (Egg)

L: Zai raora! (The egg has rotten)

C: Zai! (Egg)

L: Zai raora! (The egg has rotten)

C: Zai! (Egg)

L: Zai raora! (The egg has rotten)

C: Zai! (Egg)

L: Zai raora! (The egg has rotten)

C: Zai! (Egg)

The last person left running the game when all others have been challenged to enter the circle will be considered the winner. S/he will be congratulated by other participants. The

game ends when all the participants except the one leading have entered inside the circle or when the children are tired of playing the game.

***Tsvubvu Dzaibva* (Jackal Fruits Are Ripen)**

This game teaches alertness, team work, hard work and determination. It is played by young children of either sex.

To play ‘Tsvubvu dzaibva,’ children sit on the ground in a big circle. One is chosen to mould a number of dunes like shapes in the middle of the ring using sand. While constructing these several ‘dunes,’ s/he hides an object i.e. a small stone or a dry ‘tsvubvu’ (jackal fruit) in one of the dunes. When s/he is through with the construction, s/he says ‘Tsvubvu dzaibva’ (The jackal fruits have ripened). As soon as s/he says these words, all participants crouch looking for the object. Other participants should foretell the exact dune where the object has been hidden. Participants thus are chosen in turns (one after the other) to foretell where the object has been hidden. The participant who manages to foretell the position of the object wins the game. S/he automatically takes over from the one presiding on the game. The game ends when participants are tired to continue playing the game or want to switch on to another game.

***Tsuro Nembwa* (Dog Hunt)**

This game teaches vigilance, concentration, dodging and balance. It is played by children of either or both sexes together.

To play ‘Tsuro nembwa’ (Dog hunt), children stand in a circle, about one metre apart. One participant is chosen to play the part of a hare and the other the part of a dog. The

dog would start chasing the hare which runs in a zigzag way passing through the gaps between the standing participants. The dog should pass through all the points/gaps that the hare has passed, that is, it should not make short cuts or chase from the front. As the two run round and round the circle, the participants in the circle sing and clap hands:

Leader: Zvamutsanamutsana (A brawl has started)

Chorus: Tsuro nembwa (Between the hare and the dog)

L: Zvamutsanamutsana (A brawl has started)

C: Tsuro nembwa (Between the hare and the dog)

L: Zvamutsanamutsana (A brawl has started)

C: Tsuro nembwa (Between the hare and the dog)

L: Zvamutsanamutsana (A brawl has started)

C: Tsuro nembwa (Between the hare and the dog)

L: Zvamutsanamutsana (A brawl has started)

C: Tsuro nembwa (Between the hare and the dog)

L: Zvamutsanamutsana (A brawl has started)

C: Tsuro nembwa (Between the hare and the dog)

L: Zvamutsanamutsana (A brawl has started)

C: Tsuro nembwa (Between the hare and the dog)

L: Zvamutsanamutsana (A brawl has started)

C: Tsuro nembwa (Between the hare and the dog)

L: Zvamutsanamutsana (A brawl has started)

C: Tsuro nembwa (Between the hare and the dog)

One would be the dog and the other hare. If hare manages to run from the point of departure and back before being caught by the dog, s/he will have won for that group, otherwise his/her group loses. If win, another hare from that group would run again, restarting the game.

***Chamuvandwamuvandwa* (Hide-And-Seek/Scavenger Hunt)**

This game is played by children of either or both sexes together. The game teaches concentration, vigilance and group formation. It is played at night time when there is full moon.

To play ‘Chamuvandwamuvandwa’ (Hide-and-seek), children divide themselves into two groups A and B, who take turns to hide. The hiding is confined to a specified area and anyone who hides outside or beyond this area will not be considered. Each group chooses a leader who gives major signals to other participants of his/her group. As soon as one group goes into hiding, their leader shouts ‘Hu-ul!’ to let the other group know that they can start searching for the other group members. The group that is searching searches all possible places, and if the group fails to find some of the hiding group members, they shout ‘Chibudai, takushaiwai’ (You can come out, we have failed to find you) or ‘Ridzai chivhundukutu’ (You can now come out). Once the searching group declares this, it shows that they have lost the game to the hiding group. The hiding group would therefore shout ‘Chivhundukutu’ as they come out of their hiding places and start the game afresh.

***Tsuro Darika Mutanda* (Hare Cross the Log/River-Bank)**

This game teaches coordination, concentration, vigilance and obedience/discipline. It is played by children of either or both sexes together.

To play ‘Tsuro darika mutanda’ (Hare cross the log), a group of children should come together. A leader is chosen to start off the game. A log is placed besides him/her. The

words of the song should coincide with the participants' actions. The song goes:

Leader: Tsure tsure iwe darika mutanda (Hare, hare cross the log)

Chorus: Inodarika mutanda (It crosses the log)

L: Tsure tsure iwe darika mutanda (Hare, hare cross the log)

C: Inodarika mutanda (It crosses the log)

L: Tsure tsure iwe darika mutanda (Hare, hare cross the log)

C: Inodarika mutanda (It crosses the log)

L: Tsure tsure iwe darika mutanda (Hare, hare cross the log)

C: Inodarika mutanda (It crosses the log)

L: Tsure darika mutanda (Hare cross the log)

L: Tsure darika mutanda (Hare cross the log)

L: Tsure darika mutanda (Hare cross the log)

L: Tsure darika mutanda (Hare cross the log)

L: Tsure usadarika mutanda (Hare don't cross the log)

As soon as the leader says: 'Tsure usadarika mutanda' (Hare don't cross the log), participants should stop. Those participants who cross the log are disqualified.

Nzou Nzombe (Elephant Bull)

This game teaches concentration, vigilance/alertness and coordination in children. It is played by both boys and girls. The game teaches concentration, vigilance and verbal commands.

To play 'Nzou nzombe' (Elephant bull), children form two groups one called Nzou and the other Nzombe. One

participant from either group is chosen to lead the game. The leader slowly shouts: 'Nzo.....', as participants from either group will be listening attentively in order to notice if s/he says 'Nzombe' or 'Nzou'. If the leader says 'Nzombe', those belonging to the group 'Nzombe' would run away from others-those belonging to the group 'Nzou'. If any one of the Nzombe group is caught before running away from the others, s/he will have made the whole group to lose the game.

Chamutandavare/Maringa-ringa

This game teaches concentration, team work and vigilance. The game is played by both boys and girls.

To play 'Maringa-ringa', a group of children sit on the ground in a straight line with their legs spread. One of the participants is chosen to lead the game. The leader who is normally the one seated in the middle sings touching the legs of other participants. The song goes:

Leader: Chamutandavare

Chorus: Hoyo!

L: Chamutandavare

C: Hoyo!

L: Maringaranga

C: Ndeani

L: NdeaMuchiziri Banda

Ndazomuwana Muchakunda

Mucheche ane ndoro pamusoro

Siya chidembo pamuchinyu

Chinyura!

As soon as the leader says, ‘Chinyural’, the one whose leg has been touched should instantly fold the leg. The leader continues until all the participants have their legs folded. A new leader is then chosen and the game starts again.

Mwoto Mugomo (Fire in the Mountain)

This game teaches co-ordination, obedience, concentration rhythmical movements and vigilance. The game is played by both boys and girls.

To play ‘Mwoto mugomo’ (Fire in the mountain), children stand on the ground in a big circle. They choose a leader who starts running round and round chanting the song: ‘Mwoto mugomo’ (Fire in the mountain). The other participants follow the leader responding to the song; ‘Dzimurai’ (Put it off). The song they will be sing is as below:

Leader: Mwoto mugomo (Fire in the mountain)

Chorus: Dzimurai (Put it off)

L: Mwoto mugomo (Fire in the mountain)

C: Dzimurai (Put it off)

L: Mwoto mugomo (Fire in the mountain)

C: Dzimurai (Put it off)

L: Mwoto mugomo (Fire in the mountain)

C: Dzimurai (Put it off)

L: Mwoto mugomo (Fire in the mountain)

C: Dzimurai (Put it off)

L: Wadzima (We have put it off)

As soon as the leader says: ‘Wadzima!’ (We have put it off), the leader together with all the other children will instantly stop running. Those who fail to stop but continue

running are disqualified and laughed at for a moment before the game is started over again.

Chibatamabvi

This game teaches obedience, creativity and leadership. The game is played by young children of either or both sexes together.

To play ‘Chibatamabvi’, children should stand up in a group, but there is no formula on how they should do so. A leader is then chosen to lead the game. When the leader touches his knees, other participants should emulate. Whatever action the leader does, the other participants should imitate. While the game progresses, participants chant the following song:

Leader: Chibatamabvi chauya! (Chibatamabvi has come)

Chorus: Chauya! (He has come)

L: Chibatamabvi chauya! (Chibatamabvi has come)

C: Chauya! (He has come)

L: Chibatamabvi choenda! (Chibatamabvi is going)

C: Choenda! (He is going)

L: Chibatamabvi chauya! (Chibatamabvi has come)

C: Chauya! (He has come)

L: Chibatamabvi choenda! (Chibatamabvi is going)

C: Choenda! (He is going)

L: Chibatamabvi choseka! (Chibatamabvi is laughing)

C: Choseka! (He is laughing)

When the leader shouts, ‘Chibatamabvi chauya’ (Chibatamabvi has come), all other participants should shout, ‘Chauya!’ (He has come) while moving towards the leader.

When the leader says, ‘Chibatamabvi chaenda’ (Chibatamabvi has gone), all other participants shout, ‘Chaenda!’ (He has gone) while moving backwards, away from the leader. When the leader says, ‘Chibatamabvi choseka’ (Chibatamabvi is laughing), all other participants respond, ‘Choseka!’ (He is laughing), while laughing. Failure to move backwards or frontwards or to laugh as the leader instructs results in being disqualified. The game thus teaches obedience, coordination and alertness in young children.

Njiva Ine Mavara (Turtle Dove)

This game teaches coordination and team work. The game is played by children of either or both sexes together.

To play ‘Njiva ine mavara’ (Turtle dove), children kneel on the ground in a big circle. They choose a leader before they kneel on the ground with their hands and heads facing inside. The participants beat on the floor with their palms as they sing:

Leader: Njiva ina mavara njiva iyo! (There is a turtle dove)

Chorus: Taiona njiva ina mavara! (Yes we have seen it)

L: Njiva ina mavara njiva iyo! (There is a turtle dove)

C: Taiona njiva ina mavara! (Yes we have seen it)

L: Njiva ina mavara njiva iyo! (There is a turtle dove)

C: Taiona njiva ina mavara! (Yes we have seen it)

L: Njiva ina mavara njiva iyo! (There is a turtle dove)

C: Taiona njiva ina mavara! (Yes we have seen it)

L: Njiva ina mavara njiva iyo! (There is a turtle dove)

C: Taiona njiva ina mavara! (Yes we have seen it)

L: Njiva ina mavara njiva iyo! (There is a turtle dove)

C: Taiona njiva ina mavara! (Yes we have seen it)

L: Njiva ina mavara njiva iyo! (There is a turtle dove)

C: Taiona njiva ina mavara! (Yes we have seen it)
 L: Njiva ina mavara njiva iyo! (There is a turtle dove)
 C: Taiona njiva ina mavara! (Yes we have seen it)
 L: Njiva ina mavara njiva iyo! (There is a turtle dove)
 C: Taiona njiva ina mavara! (Yes we have seen it)
 L: Puruzende kwangwa! (Action to change style)
 C: Taiona njiva ina mavara! (Yes we have it)

As soon as the leader says: ‘Puruzende kwangwa’, all children stand on their feet and beat up their palms above their heads (kurova maoko mudenga) at once.

Chiutsi-utsi

This game is played by children of either or both sexes together. The game teaches coordination and team work.

To play ‘Chiutsi-utsi,’ a group of children stand in a big circle joining their hands. They will all be facing inside the ring. A leader is chosen to lead in the singing. As the leader sings: ‘Chiutsi-utsi’ joining hands with other participants, the latter respond: ‘Utsi’. This is repeated as the children run round and round the ring singing:

Leader: Chiutsi-utsi
 Chorus: Utsi
 L: Chitsi- utsi
 C: Utsi
 L: Chamaheu-heu
 C: Heu

As soon as participants say, ‘Heu!’ they at once jump up clapping their hands just above their heads.

Chipakirwa/Fuva

This game teaches concentration and vigilance or alertness. It is played by children of either or both sexes together.

To play ‘chipakirwa,’ a group of children come together. A leader is chosen. S/he goes up-front facing them as s/he plays around with the object in his hands. The object can be a small stones, a fruit seed or a stick. The object is hidden in either palm and have the palms tightly clinched. When the leader is now certain that he has confused the participants, he asks them to guess the palm that hides the object. This means that other participants should carefully observe all the leader’s movements in order to tell where he hides the object. Participants take turns to ‘guess’ where the object has been hidden. One who manages to correctly guess where the object has been hidden takes it away from the leader and takes over as the new leader.

Chapter Nine

Games That Teach Hygiene and Ethics of Care

The Shona are not only a peace loving people, but caring and responsible group of people. These virtues are taught to children when they are still young as the Shona believe in the saying that ‘Chembere mhedzi yakabva paudiki’ (lit. Bad character starts at childhood) and that ‘Simbi inorohwa ichapisa’ (lit. Iron is moulded when it is still hot) which has the same sense as ‘You can’t teach an old dogs new tricks’. High sense of responsibility, cleanliness and the ethics of care were all inculcated in the young through children’s traditional games such as these below:

Chidhangachidhanga (The Enclosure)

This game teaches children to be hygienic and caring. It is played by children of either or both sexes together.

To play ‘Chidhangachidhanga,’ children sit on the ground in a big circle facing inside. A leader is chosen to enter inside the ring. S/he walks around the ring and can stand beside any participant singing: ‘chidhagechidhange’. In response, the participants scold the leader/singer with words such as dirty, shabby and so on depending on his habits or character. For instance, if he is someone who is always dirty, participants would respond: ‘mazisvina aro’ (You are shabby). The song that is sung as the game progresses is this below:

Leader: Chidhangechidhanga

Chorus: Mazisvina aro

L: Chidhangechidhanga

C: Mazimbare aro

L: Heyo ipwa muzukuru

C: Amai vangu vakafa vasingadye ipwa

L: Heyo fodya muzukuru

C: Mbuya vangu vakafa vasingaputi fodya

L: Hero doro muzukuru

C: Sekuru vangu vakafa vasimwi doro

All participants take turns to lead the game. The game would end when children are tired.

Amai VaRona (Rona's Mother)

This game teaches children the ethics of care as well as not to be greedy. It is normally played by young girls though boys are not forbidden from playing the game.

To play 'Amai VaRona,' girls stand on the ground in a big circle. A leader is chosen to lead in the singing and then dancing. The song goes:

Leader: Amai vaRona

C: Hoyo hoye Rona

L: Vakapisa mwana

C: Hoyo hoye Rona

L: Nokukara nhopi

C: Hoyo hoye Rona

All: Kadhishi karakazvoda

As soon as all of them say, 'Kadhishi karakazvoda', they all start dancing round and round. The game ends when the children are tired.

Tauya Kuzoona Mary (We Have Come To See Mary)

This game teaches children to grow up responsible and caring citizens. It also teaches persistence and team work. The game is played by children of either or both sexes together.

To play 'Tauya kuzoona Mary,' children are chosen to play the roles of Mary's mother, Mary's friends and Mary herself. The children would be in a line with hands joined together (vakabatana maoko). The children make attempts to get their friend, Mary to come out of her mother's hut and play with them. However, on daily basis the children are given different excuses by Mary's mother as to why she can't come out to play with them. Throughout the game, the child playing the part of Mary pretends to be ill, feeling tired, eating food and so on. Her actions must coincide with the mother's report, that is, the mother's responds in the song. As they come face to face with Mary's mother, all children sing:

Mary's friends: Tauya kuzoona Mary, Mary, Mary (We have come to see Mary, Mary Mary)

Mary's mother: Mary akavata (Mary is fast asleep)

MF: Tauya kuzoona Mary, Mary, Mary (We have come to see Mary, Mary, Mary)

MM: Mary aenda kutsime (Mary has gone to the well)

MF: Tauya kuzoona Mary, Mary Mary (We have come to see Mary, Mary, Mary)

MM: Mary afa! (Mary is dead!)

MF: Tauya kuzoona Mary, Mary, Mary (We have come to see Mary, Mary, Mary)

MM: Mary chava chipoko! (Mary is now a ghost!)

MF: Yowe-e-e (A big cry as they run backwards)

The children would run around in fear, screaming as soon as they hear that Mary is now a ghost (chipoko) - a sign that ghosts even of deceased friends and relatives are feared in the Shona culture. That ends the game. The assumption here is that the spirit of a dead person, whether a relative, friend or stranger, is unpredictable, hence is potentially dangerous.

Mahumbwe/Matakanana/Matope (Playing House)

In southeastern Zimbabwe, this game is known by three common names, that is, 'mahumbwe', 'matakanana' and 'matope'. The game teaches creativity, observance, ethics of care and responsibility to the young. In fact the game is a socio-dramatic play played by young children of either sex together. The children who play this game are normally below the age of ten or at least those children too young to join their older brothers in their hunting expeditions, in grazing the cattle, in fetching water, in making brooms (mitsvairo) or in gathering firewood (huni) for use at home.

To play 'Mahumbwe' (Playing house), young children gather utensils like pots (useless tins or clay pots), plates, cups and food stuffs such as beans, meali-meal and so on. The children then assign one another to play roles of people such as mothers, fathers and children. Depending on the number of participants, they can also assign other members from the extended family like grandmothers, grandfathers, uncles, aunts, nephews, cousins and nieces. During the game, children imitate their parents, grandparents etc. in every way. For example, the mother-baby scene may consist of bathing the baby, feeding him, sleeping and waking up. On the other hand, the husband-wife may involve the husband doing domestic chores and other roles expected of a father like hunting, erecting/constructing shelter, inspan oxen and

gathering food, while the mother does domestic cores like cooking, soothing a baby (usually a doll carried on the back) and serving the food. While the young children imitated almost everything that their parents do at home, no sexual intercourse was permitted during 'mahumbwe'. To ensure this, 'mahumbwe' was played in the open and in daylight. The mother when preparing food can mix sand (acting as meal-meal) with water to make 'sadza' (stiff porridge), but sometimes real meals were prepared in small clay pots (tumbiya) and eaten. This way, young children lay down firm foundation for their future lives from tender ages. In fact the whole play is more of a drama with the capacity to instil in the young children the roles expected of every member of the Shona family and by extension African family. In other words, 'mahumbwe' provides a platform for the young children to explore and rehearse 'real' social roles that they shall occupy in the future when they are in their adult life. Thus with 'mahumbwe' play, children get enlightened in their interactive and imaginative 'worlds' as they have the chance to explore and examine personal concerns in a friendly environment of real parents and adolescents.

The game normally ends when participants (the young children) are now too tired to continue playing the game.

Chapter Ten

Lullabies/Soothing Songs

Lullabies are commonplace in most if not all human cultures. A lullaby is a soothing song, usually sung to young children before they go to sleep, with the intention of speeding that process¹ – their sleeping. As Opie and Opie pointed out, lullabies often have simple lyrics and are repetitive. Also, they are sung to children with the intention to calm them (when crying), to put them to sleep or simply to spend time with them. It is speculated that the term originated from ‘Lilith-bye’ or ‘Lilith-Abi’ (Hebrew for ‘Lilith, begone’). In the Jewish tradition, Lilith was a demon who was believed to steal children’s souls in the night. To guard against Lilith, Jewish people would hang four amulets on nursery walls with the inscription ‘Lilith – abi!’ [Lilith – begone] which is a possible origin of the English word ‘lullaby.’² Yet, soothing babies was always a universal phenomenon in all human societies, not just peculiar to the Jewish society. Below are some of the soothing songs I recorded during my fieldwork in southeastern Zimbabwe:

Ehuhuwe! (Be Quiet Baby!)

This song is sung by mothers when calming their crying babies. The song is also played by children, normally girls in playhouses (mahumbwe) where they learn to calm their own children in the future (when they grow up). The girls can nurse a doll or any object they desire. Sometimes the doll/object is strapped to the back of the nursing girl in the Shona traditional way of carrying a baby on the mother’s

back. The song that is sung while the ‘baby’ is trapped is this below:

Ehuhu-we!
Nyarara mwana-we!
Mwana ari kuchema
Nyarara mwana-we!
Anochemera amai vaenda
Nyarara mwana-we!
Vaenda mhiri kwaMungezi
Nyarara mwana-we!
KwaMungezi kune banga jena
Nyarara mwana-we!
Banga jena rekucheka nyama
Nyarara mwana-we!
Nyama kwayo ndeye paruware
Nyarara mwana-we!
Yapasi inozara mavhu
Nyarara mwana-we!

***Mwana Wenyu Wandikangaidza Vakoma* (Sister Your Baby Confuses)**

This is a song normally sung to the baby of one’s sister. The one calming the baby in this case is the younger sister of the mother’s baby. The ‘baby nurser’ straps the baby to her back or carries him in her arms while calming him. As she calms the baby, she sings the following song:

Mwana anochema (The baby is crying)
Kuchemera mai vake (He is crying for his mother)
Mai vake varipi? (Where is his mother?)
Vanobika bota (She is cooking porridge)

Bota nderani? (Porridge for whom?)
 Bota remucheche (Porridge for the baby)
 Mucheche aripi? (Where the baby is?)
 Ari kumusana (He is strapped at the back)
 Vasikana mandikangaidza (You girls you have disturbed
 my mind)
 Mandikwidza muti (You have made me climb up a tree)
 Une zhou (A tree with an elephant)
 Mandiona ndichiukonewa here? (Did you see me failing
 to calm the baby?)
 There ihere ihere! (Meaningless words, but meant to calm
 down the baby)

Mwana Wenyu Wachema/Warira Vakoma (Sister, Your Baby Cries)

This is a song sung by a maid who in this case is the
 younger sister of the mother of the baby. Like in the song
 ‘Mwana wenyu wandikangaidza vakoma’, the maid straps the
 baby to her back. While calming the crying baby, she then
 sings:

Mwana wenyu wachema vakoma (Your baby is crying
 sister)
 Wachemera mai vakaenda (Crying for its mother)
 Vakaenda kwachidyamupunga (Who went to
 Chidyamupunga)
 Chidyamupunga magaka aora (Chidyamupunga
 cucumbers are rotten)
 Aorera kwamungezi (They have rotten at a place beyond
 Mungezi River)
 Kwamungezi kune banga jena (Where there is a shiny
 knife)

Banga jena rekucheka nyama (A shiny knife to cut meat with)

Nyama kwayo ndeye paruwere (Good meat is that on the rock)

Yepasi yakazara mavhu (That on the ground surface is full of sand)

Heino njiva (Here comes the dove)

Inoguruguta-we (The is cooing)

Nechana muzasi-we (With a baby-dove besides it)

Chimwe chiri kumba (The other one is at home)

Chinokanga zviyo-we (Roasting millet)

Zviyo zvavatete (The millet belongs to the aunt)

Shanga yangu yawa-wu (My reed has fallen on the ground)

Yagonongwa nani (Who picked it)

Namushayadende (It could have been Mushayadende)

Agoriisepe? (But where did he put it?)

Kurwizi rukuru (Down by the big river)

Kunodyiwa shavhi nenhengetenge (Where they eat shavhi and nhengetenge)

Chamupidigori maridzangoma (And dance to music)

Huku ine mwongo (Music that make hen dance)

Muchidodoma (In the Chidodoma)

Kwiyo goko! (Kwiyo goko!)

Rururu Mwana (Calm down Baby)

Like other soothing games such as ‘Ehu-we’ (Calm down baby), this song is sung by mothers calming their babies. The song is also imitated by young children, especially girls who normally sing it as they play ‘mahumbwe’ (playhouse). A girl straps to her back a doll or any object that represents a baby and start singing calming or soothing the latter:

Ruru ruru mwana (Calm down baby)
 Mwana anochema (The baby is crying)
 Anochemerei? (What is he crying for?)
 Anochemera amai (He is crying for his mother)
 Amai vari kupi? (Where is she?)
 Vanobika bota (She is preparing some porridge)
 Bota nderaani? (Porridge for whom?)
 Bota ndere mucheche (Porridge for the baby)
 Mucheche ari kupi? (Where the baby is?)
 Ari kumusana (He is strapped to my back)

Maregarege/ Ndiwe Ani? (Maregarege/Who are you?)

Again, this song is normally sung by young maids when they are nursing babies. The maid can be the younger sister of the baby's mother who stays with the baby while his mother goes to work in the field. When the baby cries, the maid calms him asking what he wants i.e. if he wants his mother who has gone to the field. As the maid calms the baby, she sings the following song:

Uhu-u Maregarege! (Hey Maregerege!)
 Uhu-u Maregarege! (Hey Maregerege!)
 Ndiwe ani, ndiwe ani ani? (Who are you, who are you?)
 Ndini Maregarege (I am Maregerege. Here a participant can say out any other name).
 Unodei? (What do you want?)
 Unodei, dei, dei? (What do you want, want, want?)
 Mai! (Mother!)
 Mai, mai, mai! (Mother, mother, mother)
 Vari kupi? (Where is she?)
 Vari kupi, kupi? (Where is she, where is she?)

Kumunda! (In the fields!)
Kumunda, munda, munda! (In the fields, fields, fields!)
Handei! (Let's go!)
Handei, ndei, ndei! (Let's go, go, go!)
Kunokohwa! (To do harvesting!)
Kunokohwa, kohwa, kohwa! (To do harvesting,
harvesting, harvesting!)
Wu-uri Maregarege! (Yes, you are Maregarege!)

Notes

1. Opie, I. and P. Opie, P. 1997. 2nd ed. *The Oxford Dictionary of Nursery Rhymes*, Oxford University Press.
2. Jack-E in Killeen. 'What's the Story on Lilith, Adam's first wife', straightdope.com. Available at: <http://www.straightdope.com/columns/read/1513/whats-the-story-on-lilith-Adams-first-wife>.

Chapter Eleven

Counting games

While traditionally the Shona people had no culture of writing, they were highly mathematical and philosophical. They had their own methods of counting that were unique or rather in a way different from the western way of counting. Had that the Shona people's counting system and by extension African counting system was recorded, developed and/or left undisturbed by colonialism, possibly a different genre of mathematics could have been developed. It is therefore unfortunate that with the advent of colonialism, the Shona counting system was despised, looked down upon and discarded as qualitatively inferior. Some of the counting systems I recorded among the Shona people in southeastern Zimbabwe are these below:

***Kuverenga Nokutsinhira* (Counting With Emphasis)**

This game teaches correct counting of numbers and memory. The game is played by either or both boys and girls together.

To play 'Kuverenga nokutsinhira' (Counting with emphasis), children sit on the ground in a big circle. Participants take turns to actively do the counting. While one participant do the counting (kuverenga), other participants respond emphatically (kutsinhira) as a way of agreeing with the counter. The game is meant to see if all the children would be able to correctly follow the counting (kuverenga). Those who fail to correctly do the counting are disqualified (vanenge vatodzva). The counting is done as follows:

Leader: Poshi
Respondent: Kuposha mumera
L: Piri
R: Kupira midzimu
L: Tatu
R: Kutatura mambure
L: China
R: Kuchinidza mombe
L: Shanu
R: Kushanyura munda
L: Tanhatu
R: Kutanha muriwo
L: Chinomwe
R: Kunomwa biti
L: Sere
R: Kusera mamera
L: Pfumbamwe
R: Kupfumba kwenzira
L: Gumi
R: Kuguma kwengano
L: Zana
R: Mazana enyuchi
L: Churu
R: Churu chavanhu

The children continue taking turns in leading the game which will only end when children are now tired or no longer want to play the game.

Motsiro (One)

This is a counting song, played in turns. The song can be sung by both boys and girls. To play the game, children come together. Normally, there is a leader (an older child) who

knows the counting very well. Children would sit around the leader. They then take turns to stand up and do the counting. The counting goes as follows:

Motsiro- Dhendere (One-two)
Agara- Masango (Three-four)
Pirimbizha-Pamuromo (Five-six)
Wegari-Garira (Seven-eight)
Chindori-Gumirawa (Nine-ten)

Kapotsa (The first)

This is a song that teaches children how to count from one to ten in Shona. In order to play the game, children come together. Normally, there is a leader (an older child) who knows the counting very well. Children would sit around the leader. They then take turns to stand up and do the counting as follows:

Kapotsa-Katenge (One-two)
Tengende-Nechiro (Three-four)
Chokuda-Makuni (Five-six)
Kunika-Doriro (Seven-eight)
Kubhanga-Kun'e-e! (Nine-ten)

Mutsepete/Mugodobo (Tumbleweed)

This is a counting game that trains children endurance and resilience as they would have to repeat the same thing for longer periods. A group of children will take a small branch of weed called mutsepete/mugodobo (tumbleweed). The weed has numerous leaves. In some cases a branch of a tree called Muzeze (a tree with very small leaves) is used. Children

would then take turns to do the counting which is repeated, without stopping, until all the leaves have been counted. The counting goes:

Mutsepete! (Tumbleweed)

Mutsepete! (Tumbleweed)

Mutsepete! (Tumbleweed)

Mutsepete! (Tumbleweed)

Mutsepete! (Tumbleweed)

Mutsepete! (Tumbleweed)

Mutsepete! (Tumbleweed)

Mutsepete! (Tumbleweed)

Mutsepete! (Tumbleweed)

Mutsepete! (Tumbleweed)

Pete!

Or

Mugodobo! (Tumbleweed)

Mugodobo! (Tumbleweed)

Mugodobo! (Tumbleweed)

Mugodobo! (Tumbleweed)

Mugodobo! (Tumbleweed)

Mugodobo! (Tumbleweed)

Mugodobo! (Tumbleweed)

Mugodobo! (Tumbleweed)

Mugodobo! (Tumbleweed)

Mugodobo! (Tumbleweed)

Kobo!

The participant says ‘Pete’ or ‘Kobo’ when counting the last leaf in the branch. If you stop or stammer before finishing the counting you will be disqualified. You will have failed (wadzva).

Chapter Twelve

Swimming Games

Swimming as it is played in Olympics is not a new game in Zimbabwe. During research for this book, I was told that traditionally the game was played in Zimbabwe as in many other parts of the world since time immemorial. In south-eastern Zimbabwe, swimming has many other sub-games. These include:

Chitsvambe/Chitsveru

This game can be played inside water when children are swimming or outside water. When played in water entry, the game teaches water entry, floating, front and back crawl inside water. Whether played inside or outside water, the game also teaches dodging as well as vigilance since much alertness is needed to play the game.

To play 'Chitsvambe,' a group of children have to decide who has the 'chitsvambe' or 'chitsveru'. This can be done by counting. The one who shouts last automatically has the 'chitsvambe'. S/he then starts chasing other children in an attempt to catch and touch one of them. The one who is touched is now the one with the 'chitsvambe' as 'chitsvambe' is passed on to the next participant by way of touching.

Normally a child being chased by the participant with 'chitsvambe' tries to prevent herself/himself from getting the 'chitsvambe' by sitting down or touching an object agreed upon by the group. The object can be a tree or a rock. This can however be done after running a long distance.

Heri Sadza Mutekwe (Here Is Sadza Mutekwe)

This game is played in water where there is sand. The game teaches group formation, vigilance and dodging. It is played by both boys and girls grouped according to their sex. Group A will be that of boys while group B will be that of girls. The first group (A) start the game by putting sand in the hand and say 'Heri sadza Mutekwe.' When they say these words, the girls answer 'Swedera' indicating with their gestures that the boys can come closer. As they come closer the girls saying the same words 'Heri sadza Mutekwe', the girls make an attempt to touch the hands of the boys. Boys also make a similar attempt. If your hand is touched you automatically join the other group-an odd group as it is a group of opposite sex - and laughed at by your own group members where you formally belonged. The game continues until even more girls are caught/recruited to the odd group or vice-versa. The words that are continually shouted are:

Boys: Heri sadza Mutekwe (Mutekwe here is stiff porridge)

Girls: Swedera (Come closer)

Boys: Heri sadza Mutekwe (Mutekwe here is stiff porridge)

Girls: Swedera (Come closer)

Boys: Heri sadza Mutekwe (Mutekwe here is stiff porridge)

Girls: Swedera (Come closer)

Boys: Heri sadza Mutekwe (Mutekwe here is stiff porridge)

Girls: Swedera (Come closer)

Boys: Heri sadza Mutekwe (Mutekwe here is stiff porridge)

Girls: Swedera (Come closer)

Boys: Heri sadza Mutekwe (Mutekwe here is stiff porridge)

Girls: Swedera (Come closer)

Boys: Heri sadza Mutekwe (Mutekwe here is stiff porridge)

Girls: Swedera (Come closer)

The game ends when all members of one group are recruited into the odd group or when the children are now tired of playing the game.

Nhupe Yakabata Mwana Mukati/Chamunyurudu

This is a swimming game played by children of either or both sexes together. The game teaches concentration, vigilance and group formation.

To play the game, boys and girls form two groups (if to be played by both boys and girls together). One group comprising boys only stand on one side and that of girls on the other side. Boys sink themselves and swim towards the opposite group in an attempt to resurface at so and so of the group. The objective is to catch any member of the opposite group. Girls are therefore required to remain vigilant observing water movements so that they are not caught unaware. Those caught are laughed at as they would belong to the odd group. Sometimes boys would re-surface just in the midst of the girls only to disappear once again into the water.

Chapter Thirteen

Seasonal Games

In Zimbabwe and in particular in south-eastern part of Zimbabwe, the people while they have myriad of children's traditional games, some games are not played at any time of the day or of the year. Also, some games are played in a particular time of the day. Others are played in a particular season, hence the title adopted for this chapter, seasonal games. During my research, I was told by some of my research informants that it was considered a taboo to play some games such as 'ngano' (folktale), for example, during summer season and during the day, but in winter and in the evening. Everyone born and grew up in the Shona society thus new that this game is only played during this season and not another. In south-eastern Zimbabwe, some of the games that were classified as seasonal are these below:

***Kwedu Kune Nyimo* (At Our Place We Have Roundnuts)**

This game requires a large number of children, normally of up to 20 in number. But they can be less than 20. The children divide themselves into two groups, say group P and Q. Members of each group spread and join their hands. The two groups one of which comprising four children (Group P) stand in two circles, with a smaller group (P) making the inner circle. The rest of the children form the outer circle (Q). The smaller group –those in the inner circle- start the game. They would sing:

Group P: Kwedu kune nyimo (At our place we have roundnuts)

Group Q: Hakuna mandere (There are no beetles)

P: Kwedu kune nyimo (At our place we have roundnuts)

Q: Hakuna mandere (There are no beetles)

P: Kwedu kune nyimo (At our place we have roundnuts)

Q: Hakuna mandere (There are no beetles)

P: Kwedu kune nyimo (At our place we have roundnuts)

Q: Hakuna mandere (There are no beetles)

All: Kwedu, kwedu (At our place, at our place)

As the singing progresses, the groups move either clockwise or anticlockwise direction depending on the decision of the inner group P. This is to say when group P moves clockwise, all those in the outer group Q should follow suit. Those who fail to follow the rhythm are automatically disqualified from the game. And, as soon as they say 'Kwedu, kwedu' (At our place, at our place), all children sit down at the same time.

Mvura Naya-naya! (Come Now Rainfall!)

This is a seasonal song normally sung during rainy season, especially when there is drizzle. The song is an outdoor one. To sing the song, children thus come out of their houses in large numbers, but no specific number of children is required. The game has no specific formula, and thus children can stand on the ground and start singing:

Mvura naya-naya (Let rain come)

Tidye makavhu (So that we can plant gourds and eat them)

Mvura naya-naya (Let rain come)

Tidye mapudzi (So that we can plantand eat them)

Mvura naya-naya (Let rain come)

Tidye chibage (So that we can plant maize and eat them)

Mvura naya-naya (Let rain come)

Tidye manwiwa (So that we can plant watermelons and eat them).

Kusika Nyimo (Rotating Roundnuts into Fighting)

This game teaches tolerance, discipline, team work and good development of fingers. Normally this game was played by boys from two to six people. Each of the boys gathers a handful of 'nyimo' (roundnuts). They then go to the 'sikiro renyimo' (a place where they play the game of 'kusika nyimo'), normally a smoothened disused grinding meal 'guyo' or a smooth *ruware* –nowadays a useless exercise book or text book is used for 'kusika nyimo' (rotating roundnuts into fighting). There, the young boys take turns to rotate (*kusika*) their 'nyimo' (roundnuts) into fighting (*kurvisanisa nyimo*). Fruits of trees such as 'mukamba' (mahogany) and 'musbozhowa' are also used to play the game. The fruits of these trees are known as 'makamba' and 'shozhowa' respectively. One player wins when his roundnut rotates strongly that it manages to beat roundnuts of other players out of the 'sikiro' (the confined place for the game i.e. a useless exercise book). Elderly people like senior bachelors or even those with children could also play the game. They would say there words while playing the game. Normally the oldest among the players start off the game and say 'maga nemazembera okusika nyimo' (boastful praises of rotating roundnuts) such as:

Zangiriri kusika nyimo (Rotate my roundnut) (This is a formula used for entering the fighting field/ 'sikiro renyimo')

Zvandakadya mwana waNdau-ndau ndakazonzwini? (When I ate Ndau-ndau's child what happened to me?)

While saying these words, the first participant will be introducing his 'nyimo' (roundnut) into the 'sikiro' (a playground for the game). As soon as the first participant says these words, the next participant feels challenged. He therefore says the following boastful praises while introducing his 'nyimo' (roundnut) to compete with that of the first participant:

Kunosumwa iri mushunje
Iri mumusakasaka inozvinzwira
Tamba tione mushoma, kachongwe!

Once the second participant says these words, the third participant also feels challenged. He introduces his 'nyimo' by way of rotating it on the 'sikiro' (playing ground) as well. While introducing his 'nyimo' (roundnut), he says 'maga nemazembera okusika nyimo' (boastful praises of rotating roundnuts):

Zangiriri kusika nyimo,
Kuipa kuipa zvaro gudo,
Asi haridyi munhu
Kana chakafa choga
Uye haridyi mumunda usiku

As soon as the third participant says these words, the fourth participant feels challenged. He also takes his turn to introduce his 'nyimo' (roundnut) by way of rotating it on the 'sikiro'. While introducing his 'nyimo', he says 'maga nemazembera okusika nyimo' (boastful praises of rotating roundnuts):

Zangiriri kusika nyimo
Kufa kwemurume kubuda ura
Panotorerwa murume demo panosara matsurutsuru
Tamba tione chinyimo change
Dema-dema dzose tione!

A participant is said to have won the game if his 'nyimo' (roundnut) manages to beat all participants' roundnuts out of the 'sikiro' (playing ground).

Ngano (Folktale)

'Ngano' are stories told to young children from about five years of age to about eleven years, but even adult persons can also listen to the stories. The stories are often false but created to offer a wide range of lessons to the young children who still need their elders to inculcate values (about their culture) in them. The stories are normally told by an elderly person of the village who can be an old woman (ambuya/vatete) or an old man (sekuru) who is normally an expert in story telling, culture and traditional values.

It should be remarked that in a typical Shona traditional culture, 'ngano' are not told at any time of the year. Neither are they told at any time of the day. In fact it is a taboo to tell 'ngano' at any time of the year or day except in winter and at night when the activity doesn't disturb normal chores/activities of the time. At night 'ngano' (both in singular and plural) are told before supper while children are waiting for their supper. The stories are therefore meant to make sure that children don't surrender to bed before having supper.

To tell 'ngano', there must be a 'sarungano' (story teller) and 'vateereri' (listeners/audiences). The latter are

young children, both boys and girls, while the former (sarungano) is normally an old man or old woman. The 'sarungano' is often an experienced person of reputable character. With his (thrilling) stories, this person takes his/her audiences from this physical world to the world of fantasy, from the world of reality to the world unreal through his thrilling stories. The stories are often of different characters ranging from animals, snakes, birds and persons, but all accorded the powers to act as human beings. For example, a hare can feature in the story as an animal with the ability to talk, propose love from a human girl or marry a human being. This is made possible due to the reason that the young children who listen to 'ngano' are less experienced to distinguish the real character of a hare from that which is not, that is to distinguish what a hare is capable of doing (or not doing) in real life. All what the story teller does is to make sure that the children are entertained and educated at the same time.

To make sure that they are entertained, children are often given chance to be part of the 'ngano' itself through singing and dancing as many 'ngano' have songs. And, in order to inculcate lessons and foster societal expectations and/or values, villains in the stories are never cherished, but always fail and get punished in the end. It is thus from the punishment and suffering of the villains in the end of the stories that the young children (audiences) draw good moral lessons from 'ngano'.

In southeastern Zimbabwe where I carried out this research, 'ngano' though still feature in some villages in the countryside, they are now often told in Schools, and during the day. During my research, I was told by one of my respondents (an old man in his late 90s) that telling or listening to 'ngano' during the day was a taboo with the same

gravity as 'makunakuna' (incest) which could cause droughts, famine and even diseases and other misfortunes in the village. According to him, violating this taboo could attract a fine of an ox (paid to the chief) by the parents of those who could be found telling and listening to 'ngano' during the day or in summer season.

Chapter Fourteen

Recreational and Socialization Games

As highlighted in the introduction of this book, the Shona culture is a rich and complete culture. In terms of children's traditional games, it had all sorts of games, some meant to develop the intellect, physical body, spiritual and moral characters. The other games were also meant for entertainment and socialization. In this chapter, I focus on the latter.

Pamusana Pangu Panei? (What Is At My Back?)

This game teaches socialization as well as promoting physical fitness. The game is played by children of either or both sexes together.

To play 'Pamusana pangu panei?' (What is at my back?), children come together and form two groups, A and B. Those in group A kneel on the ground in a big circle. Group B members stand behind group A with hands placed on the back of those in front. Those kneeling begin singing, 'Pamusana pangu paneiko?' and the standing group answers, 'Pane chakamera'. As soon as they come to the part, 'Dhidhidhi tendeu', the kneeling group turn their heads sideways trying to check what exactly are on their backs. The song goes:

Leader: Pamusana pangu paneiko (What is on my back?)

Chorus: Pane chakamera (There is a growth)

L: Pamusana pangu paneiko (What is on my back?)

C: Pane chakamera (There is a growth)

L: Pamusana pangu paneiko (What is on my back?)

C: Pane chakamera (There is a growth)

L: Pamusana pangu paneiko (What is on my back?)

C: Pane chakamera (There is a growth)

All in Group A: Dhidhidhi tendeuku (Action of turning heads sideways)

As soon as they come to the part, 'Dhidhidhi tendeuku', they all look sideways trying to check what is on their back. The game would end when the children are tired.

Zvembudzi (Goats Play)

This is a recreational and social game played by both boys and girls. While the game is meant for recreation, it can be viewed as a philosophical wonder by the young on the physical nature of the animal known as goat (mbudzi). As the young are used to see their fathers at home with beards around their chins and mothers without, they are perplexed when seeing both he-goats and she-goats with beards. Their amazement is expressed in this game, 'zvembudzi' (goats play).

To play 'zvembudzi' (goats play), children kneel on the ground in a big circle. They face inside the ring with their hands spread inwards. One of the participants is chosen to start the game by singing as others respond moving their hands backwards and forth. As the game progresses the participants chant the following song:

Leader: Zvembudzi (Goat's nature)

Chorus: Zvandikanganisa (It has disturbed my mind)
 L: Baba ndebvu (Father with beards)
 C: Zvandikanganisa (It has disturbed my mind)
 L: Mai ndebvu (Mother with beards)
 C: Zvandikanganisa (It has disturbed my mind)
 L: Zvembudzi (Goat's nature)
 C: Zvandikanganisa (It has disturbed my mind)
 L: Mai ndebvu, baba ndebvu (Both mother and father with beards)
 C: Zvandikanganisa (It has disturbed my mind).

The game ends when children are now too tired to continue playing the game or want to play a different game.

Banga raManjai-njai (Manjai-njai's knife)

This game teaches perseverance, team work (living and working together), cooperation and socialization. The game is played by both boys and girls.

To play 'banga raManjai-njai' (Manjai-njai's knife), a participant is chosen to hide an object in the soil normally sand. This is carefully and secretly done such that other participants do not notice where the object has been hidden. Other participants are then asked to find out the object while kneeling down. As they look for the object, they chant the song:

Leader: Banga raManjai-njai rarasika, baba iwe N'ombe!
 (Manjai-njai's knife is lost, oh father N'ombe)

Chorus: Ah, ririmo mudendere! (Ah, it is in the nest!)

L: Banga raManjai-njai rarasika, baba iwe N'ombe!
 (Manjai-njai's knife is lost, oh father N'ombe)

C: Ah, ririmo mudendere! (Ah, it is in the nest!)

L: Banga raManjai-njai rarasika, baba iwe N'ombe!
(Manjai-njai's knife is lost, oh father N'ombe)

C: Ah, ririmo mudendere! (Ah, it is in the nest!)

L: Banga raManjai-njai rarasika, baba iwe N'ombe!
(Manjai-njai's knife is lost, oh father N'ombe)

C: Ah, ririmo mudendere! (Ah, it is in the nest!)

L: Banga raManjai-njai rarasika, baba iwe N'ombe!
(Manjai-njai's knife is lost, oh father N'ombe)

C: Ah, ririmo mudendere! (Ah, it is in the nest!)

L: Banga raManjai-njai rarasika, baba iwe N'ombe!
(Manjai-njai's knife is lost, oh father N'ombe)

C: Ah, ririmo mudendere! (Ah, it is in the nest!)

L: Banga raManjai-njai rarasika, baba iwe N'ombe!
(Manjai-njai's knife is lost, oh father N'ombe)

C: Ah, ririmo mudendere! (Ah, it is in the nest!)

As soon as one of the participants discovers the object, the game ends. The one who found out the object takes the lead.

Dzuwe/Juwe (Swinging Game)

This is a recreational game that teaches socialization among the young children. The game is also good for muscle development. It is played by children of either sex. Besides, the game can be played by one or more children taking turns to ride on a swing tied to a branch of big tree.

To play 'dzuwe' (swinging game), a swing is tied to a strong branch of a tree. One participant sits on the swing and the swing is either pushed (if participants are more than one) or it swings alone due to the force exerted to the swing by the participant. The participant swings, but making sure that s/he doesn't go too high lest s/he falls and hurt herself.

Gadha/Fishu-Fishu (Skipping Game)

This game teaches balance, sets and counting numbers besides being chiefly played for recreation. The game is normally played by young girls though boys sometimes play it.

To play ‘gadha’ (skipping game), two participants (A and B) hold the ends of a rope of about 3m. A third participant C is chosen to skip the rope, jumping up and down on one spot, the middle position. The skipping participant skips four times. At the fifth time she changes her position, usually to a crouching position and carries on skipping on that position. This is repeated until the participant reaches the twentieth count. The twentieth count is the one called ‘gadha’. If a participant skips up to this twentieth count before making mistake she has a point. She restarts the game until she makes a mistake. A second participant takes over once the first makes a mistake. While the game progresses a song is sung by all participants at once:

All: Poshi (One)

A: Piri (Two)

A: Tatu (Three)

A: China (Four)

A: Pasi (A sign that participant C should change position i.e. crouch)

A: Shanu (Five)

A: Tanhatu (Six)

A: Nomwe (Seven)

A: Sere (Eight)

A: Mira (A sign that participant C should change position again i.e. stand)

A: Pfumbamwe (Nine)

A: Gumi (Ten)
 A: Gumi nechimwe (Eleven)
 A: Gumi nembiri (Twelve)
 A: Pasi (A sign that C should change position again)
 A: Gumi nenhatu (Thirteen)
 A: Gumi nena (Fourteen)
 A: Gumi neshanu (Fifteen)
 A: Gumi netanhatu (Sixteen)
 A: Mira (A sign that C should change position)
 A: Gumi nenomwe (Seventeen)
 A: Gumi nesere (Eighteen)
 A: Gumi nepfumbabmw (Nineteen)
 A: Gadha (Twenty)

As soon as they say ‘gadha,’ the skipping participant has a point as she has come to the end of the game. She starts over again until she makes a mistake.

***Kurwisanisa Zvipfuyo* (Setting domestic animals to fight one another)**

This game is normally played by young boys when grazing cattle. The game is meant for entertainment and socialization.

To play the game, young boys set two angry domestic animals on each other. The animals set on each other are those that can easily get angry, for example, cocks, male sheep and bulls. In the case of the latter, two bulls from different villages (A and B) are driven at each other. While the bulls are driven, the boys throw dust at them. This angers the two bulls as each of them think the other bull is the one that is throwing dust at it. As soon as the bulls begin fighting, the boys surround them jeering and cheering saying all sorts of boastful exclamations. One group may say ‘Uchaona

zvinoitwa bhuru renyu' (You will see what will happen to your bull). One of the bulls is declared defeated when it runs away, forced against a tree or fall in a donga. At this point, there will be a very big shout as those with the winning bull laugh at those whose bull has been defeated. You often hear those with the winning bull laughing and sometimes mocking those with loosing bull saying 'Ehe-e, wazvionaka! Bhuru redu ndimutungadzose' (Yes, you have seen it. Our bull is a champion). Those with the defeated bull often respond saying 'Ah-a, rega uone zvako. Musi wazvinenge zvakakwidza renyu bhuru richabvajurwa matumbu' (Ah, wait and see. The day our bull is prepared yours will have offals out). In some cases, especially when the bull contest was between villages (inter-village), the losers (those with the defeated bull) may challenge the winners (those with the victorious bull) to fight each other.

It is worth noting that though 'kurwisanisa zvipfuyo' (setting domestic animals to fight each other) is a common children's game, it is often a forbidden game played in the absence of the boys' parents. This is chiefly because the game often results in one animal being injured or enmity between village boys.

Hunting Games

While hunting games are considered as children's territory, not all of the hunting games were (and are still) played by children. Some like hunting *per se*, that is hunting of big animals (game hunting) are done by adult people. Others are played by both (the young and the old). In this chapter, I focus on those games that were and are played by both the young and the adult people as I observed in south-eastern Zimbabwe. These hunting games include the following:

Kuteya Shiri Neurimbo (Catching Birds with Bird Lime)

This game is played by boys and it is unusual to see girls playing the same game. Normally boys of between ten and seventeen years are involved in the catching of birds using bird lime. Younger boys of between five and nine are however allowed following and watching their older brothers setting traps using bird lime. To make the bird lime used in the catching, an opening is cut at the base of a tree called 'Mukondekonde' (Euphorbia tree) to extract 'muto' (sap). The 'muto' is extracted into a small tin before it is cooked in a disused tin or clay pot. The steam produced from the 'muto' is very poisonous and can cause temporary blindness (if gets into contact with eyes) or bloats if gets into contact with one's body. When the sap is cooked, it forms 'urimbo' (bird lime) which is grey in colour. The boys then take the bird lime to a tree where birds normally take rest. This can be a fruit tree such as 'muonde' (fig tree) or 'mubhereko' (mulberry tree). The bird lime is spread on tree branches such

that when birds come to take rest or feed on the fruits they are trapped. The bird lime is very strong that any bird that gets into contact with it sticks or is trapped such that it fails to fly away.

***Kuteya Mbeva Nemaŕiva* (Catching Mice with Trapping Stones)**

Like catching birds with bird lime, catching ‘mbeva’ (mice) with trapping stones is a boys’ adventure. Catching mice with trapping stones, is however a seasonal activity that is on undertaken immediate after harvesting time, that is, from April until immediate before rain season. The activity is normally undertaken by children from the age of eight to sixteen, although older people can also set traps to catch mice.

To catch mice with trapping stones (mariva), boys go out into the forest and look for ‘mwezha’ (mice pathways). After discovering the ‘mwezha’, flat stones are set across the mice pathways with foodstuffs inside. The foodstuffs used to trap mice include maize grains smeared with peanut butter, roundnuts or roasted groundnuts. Such foodstuffs are known by the young boys to be favourite food for mice. The trapping stones are set during the day since mice normally during the night. Early in the morning, boys wake up and check if any of their trapping stones catches mice. The mice are eaten with ‘sadza’ (stiff porridge) as relish.

***Kuteya Shiri Nemhiripiri* (Catching Birds Using Chilli)**

This is a pastime by boys of between ten and seventeen years, though old people especially hunters can engage in the same activity. Like in all other hunting games, younger boys in the

category of five to nine are welcome to follow, watch and assist their older brothers in the activity. This is how the game (like many other games discussed in this book) is passed on to the next generation and its continued existence guaranteed.

To catch birds using chilli, boys collect hot chilli or red pepper from the field. They crush the pepper into a powder before they take it to the forest. In the forest, the boys will have discovered a place where birds such as guinea fowl spend their time during the day. The boys sprinkle the crushed pepper all over the place where the birds play. Pepper has a choking effect and cause temporary blindness to the birds. Once the pepper is sprinkled, the boys hide in the bush adjacent to the sprinkled place. They will be waiting to catch any bird that comes and is temporarily blinded.

Kufura Shiri (Bird Shooting)

Like ‘kuteya shiri nemhiripiri’ (Catching Birds Using Chilli), ‘kufura shiri’ is a pastime by boys of between ten and seventeen years, though old people engage in the activity as part of their hunting expeditions. The game teaches accuracy in shooting, muscle co-ordination and balance.

To engage in the shooting activity, boys take their bows and arrows into the forest where there are many birds. Nowadays, catapults instead of bows and arrows are used especially in south-eastern Zimbabwe where the present research was conducted. During those times I accompanied the little boys in their bird shooting expeditions, I discovered that while the activity was mainly a pastime, there was an element of competition associated with the game. I could hear the boys saying: ‘Taku, nhasi haundikundi kufura shiri. Uchaona dzandinobva nadzo’ (Taku, today you won’t beat

me in the shooting. You will see how many birds I will bring home). The boys thus competed in a bid to distinguish the sharpshooter from the poor shooter.

Also, the birds shot during the expeditions were also used to supplement the boys' relish at home. It is in this respect, among others, that bird shooting is a very important aspect of social life in the Shona society.

This is a comprehensive study and erudite description of the struggle of African Indigenous Knowledge Systems in an Age of Globalization, using in particular eighty-four children's traditional games in south-eastern Zimbabwe. The book is an informative and interesting anthropological account of rare African children's games at the risk of disappearing under globalization. The virtue of the book does not only lie in its modest philosophical questioning of those knowledge forms that consider themselves as superior to others, but in its laudable, healthy appreciation of the creative art forms of traditional literature that features in genres such as endangered children's traditional games. The book is a clarion call to Africans and the world beyond to come to the rescue of relegated and marginalized African creativity in the interest of future generations.

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